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BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL ESSAYS.

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REPRINTED FROM REVIEWS,

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BY A. HAYWARD, ESQ., Q.C.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, LONGMANS, AND ROBERTS.
1858.

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PREFATORY NOTICE.

In forming this collection, I have taken care to confine it to contributions which aimed at the general and comprehensive treatment of subjects or characters, rather than the mere criticism of books; and a preference has been given to those which I have been fortunately enabled to enrich from peculiar sources of information,—such as the reminiscences of distinguished friends and contemporaries.

The two Essays entitled "*George Selwyn*" and "*Lord Chesterfield*" had been already reprinted in Messrs. Longmans' "*Traveller's Library;*" and "*The Art of Dining*" forms part of "*Murray's Railway Reading.*" Although the second edition had been stereotyped, Mr. Murray kindly permitted me to include it in this compilation, as well as any articles of mine that I might choose from "*The Quarterly Review.*"

A. H.

March, 1858.

Recently published, by the same Writer.

JURIDICAL TRACTS.

PART I.

Containing : 1. Historical Sketch of the Law of Real Property in England. — 2. The Principles and Practice of Pleading. — 3. Historical Sketch of Reforms in the Criminal Law.

Preparing for publication.

PART II.

Containing : 1. History and Present State of the Laws relating to the Settlement and Removal of the Poor in England, Scotland, and Ireland. — 2. Sketch of the Criminal Courts and Procedure of France. — 3. Outline of the Criminal Jurisprudence of the leading States of Germany.

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ERRATUM IN THE FIRST VOLUME.

Page 254, line 2, *for* "1841" *read* "1848".
„ 255, „ 29, *dele* "(1805)".

ESSAYS.

THE REV. SYDNEY SMITH:

HIS LIFE, CHARACTER, AND WRITINGS.

(From the Edinburgh Review, July, 1855.)

A Memoir of the Reverend Sydney Smith. By his Daughter, Lady Holland. With Selections from his Letters. Edited by Mrs. Austin. In 2 vols. London: 1855.

The publication of this book affords us the opportunity for which we have been anxiously watching, which we must ere long have found or made for ourselves, had it not presented itself. We should be guilty of an unpardonable neglect of duty were we to allow Sydney Smith to be permanently placed amongst the illustrious band of English worthies in the Temple of Fame, at the risk of seeing too low a pedestal assigned to him, without urging on the attention of contemporaries, and recording for the instruction of posterity, his claims to rank as a great public benefactor, as well as his admitted superiority in what we must make bold to call his incidental and subordinate character of "wit." It was in this Journal that he commenced his brilliant and eminently useful career as a social, moral, and political reformer. He persevered in that career through good and evil report, with unabated vigour and vivacity, both in writing and conversation, until the

greater part of his original objects had been attained; and the simplest recapitulation of these would be sufficient to show that his countrymen have durable benefits and solid services, as well as pleasant thoughts and lively images, to thank him for.

With, perhaps, the single exception of Lord Brougham, no one man within living memory has done more to promote the improvement and well-being of mankind, by waging continual war, with pen and tongue, against ignorance and prejudice in all their modifications and varieties; nor should it be forgotten, that, although he wielded weapons very like those which had been employed in the immediately preceding age to undermine law, order, and religion, his exquisite humour was uniformly exerted on the side of justice, virtue, and rational freedom. Indeed, it would hardly have been possible to pervert or misapply so rare and distinctive a gift, being, as it notoriously was, the intense expression, the flower, the cream, the quintessence, of reason and good sense. We will not say that, like Goldsmith, he adorned everything he touched, but he compelled everything he touched to appear in its natural shape and genuine colours. In his hands the logical process called the *reductio ad absurdum* operated like the spear of Ithuriel. No form of sophistry or phase of bigotry could help throwing off its disguise at his approach; and the dogma which has been deemed questionable touching ridicule in general, may be confidently predicated of *his*, namely, that it was literally and emphatically the test of truth.

"Sydney Smith's Life: he who opens this book under the expectation of reading in it curious adventures, important transactions, or public events, had better close the volume, for none of these things will he find therein."

So stands the first sentence of Lady Holland's preface, and such an announcement at starting must

be admitted to be the reverse of a temptation or a lure.

"Nothing," she proceeds, "can be more thoroughly private and eventless than the narrative I am about to give; yet I feel myself, and I have reason to believe there are many who will feel with me, that this Life is not, therefore, uninteresting or unimportant; for, though circumstances over which my father had no control forbade his taking that active share in the affairs of his country for which his talents and his character so eminently fitted him, yet neither circumstances nor power could suppress these talents, or subdue and enfeeble that character; and I believe I may assert, without danger of contradiction, that by them, and the use he has made of them, he has earned for himself a place amongst the great men of his time and country.

"Such being the case, however, his talents, and the employment of them, are alone before the world. This is but half the picture, and I believe few who have known so much do not wish to know more.

"The mode of life, the heart, the habits, the thoughts and feelings, the conversation, the home, the occupations of such a man,—all, in short, which can give life and reality to the picture,—are as yet wanting; and it is to endeavour to supply this want that I have ventured to undertake this task."

The task was a labour of love, and, like almost all such labours, it has been efficiently as well as conscientiously performed. This monument erected by filial piety to our revered and lamented friend's memory, will at once compel unhesitating and universal assent to what might otherwise be thought an exaggerated estimate of his genius and his worth. It was a theory of Lavater that we insensibly contract a certain degree of physical resemblance, especially as regards expression, to those with whom we live much in domestic intimacy. Be this as it may, there can be little doubt that a master mind exercises a powerful influence on the feelings, understandings, and modes of thought of those who are brought into hourly contact with it through a series of years. When the

head of a family, besides bearing the indelible stamp of intellectual superiority, is of a genial, affectionate, and communicative disposition, the other members commonly contract a habit of looking at objects from the same point of view or through the same medium, adopt similar models of excellence, and square their conduct by analogous standards of propriety. It is upon this principle that we account for what, under the circumstances, may be termed the fortunate agreement of tone, taste, and turn of mind between Sydney Smith and his biographer. No one but an admiring, sympathising, and cordially cooperating daughter, or helpmate, could or would have supplied the most suggestive, illustrative, and consequently most valuable portions of the work; those, for example, descriptive of the Parsonage of Foston, his house, his furniture, his equipages, his establishment, and his way of life there. The earnestness and singleness of purpose with which these passages are written, actually impart some of the paternal force and colouring to the language, thereby compensating for the occasional negligence of the composition and a want of polish in the style.

Mrs. Austin, who has edited the second volume containing a selection from the Letters, was also well qualified by a friendship of many years, by reciprocated esteem, and by intellectual accomplishments, to form a just and adequate conception of her undertaking. She has executed it, as might have been anticipated, with irreproachable discretion and discrimination; and altogether, although it may sound strange that the delineation of a character so essentially masculine as Sydney Smith's should have been reserved for female pens, we believe that any disappointment which may be felt after a patient perusal of these volumes, will be mainly attributable to incorrect and illusory notions of the scope and capa-

bilities of such a biography. The life of a writer, or artist, is in his works. Their original charm and influence cannot be reproduced by any vividness of description or eloquence of narrative: the excitement of surprise or novelty is unattainable; and the utmost that can reasonably be expected from a Memoir like the one before us, is that it shall revive agreeable reminiscences, awaken elevating associations, stimulate honourable ambition, supply fresh beacons for our guidance, and enable us, for the edification of the living, to arrive at a just estimate of the merits and demerits of the dead.

The leading incidents of Sydney Smith's career are soon told, and a brief summary of these will form a natural and necessary introduction to the remarks which we propose to make upon them.

So long as mankind shall continue to attach importance to ancestral distinctions, it will be an idle affectation to depreciate them; and many enlightened men, famous for their superiority to popular weaknesses and vulgar errors, have endeavoured to defend the pride of birth on philosophical grounds. "A lively desire of knowing and recording our ancestors," says Gibbon, "so generally prevails, that it must depend on some common principle in the minds of men." In the same spirit of candour, Bishop Watson has observed,—"Without entering into a disquisition concerning the rise of this general prejudice, I freely own that I am a slave to it myself." Sydney Smith had none of it. He once laughingly declared, in reference to the somewhat laboured attempt of the author of "Waverley" to establish a pedigree, "when Lady L—— asked me about my grandfather, I told her he disappeared about the time of the Assizes, and we asked no questions." This, we need hardly say, was a jocular fabrication; for his descent, without being noble, was respectable on the side of each

parent, and Lady Holland, unappalled by Sir David Brewster's authority, still retains hopes of being able to claim Sir Isaac Newton for an ancestor. Her account of her paternal grandfather, Mr. Robert Smith, is that "he was very clever, odd by nature, but still more odd by design; and that (having first married a beautiful girl, from whom he parted at the church door) he spent all the early part of his life partly in wandering over the world for many years, and partly in diminishing his fortune, by buying, altering, spoiling, and then selling about nineteen different places in England." The beautiful girl was Miss Ollier, or d'Olier, the youngest daughter of a Languedoc emigrant for conscience' sake. She was the mother of the four Smiths, Robert (Bobus), Cecil, Courtenay, and Sydney, and we are requested to believe that all the finest qualities of their minds were derived from her. Their filial piety, however, has not induced them to follow the example of the celebrated French brothers, who caused to be inscribed over their mother's grave in Père la Chaise: "*A la mère des trois Dupins.*"

The talents of the Smiths for controversy must have been singularly precocious, for the tradition goes that, before they were old enough for school, they might be seen "neglecting games, and often lying on the floor, stretched over their books, and discussing with loud voice and vehement gesticulation, every point that arose." Robert and Cecil were sent to Eton, Courtenay and Sydney to Winchester, where Sydney rose in due time to be captain of the school. Such was his own and his brother's proficiency that their schoolfellows signed a round-robin refusing to compete for the college prizes, if the Smiths, who always gained them, were allowed to enter the lists. He used to say, "I believe whilst a boy at school, I made above ten thousand Latin verses, and no man

in his senses would dream in after-life of ever making another. So much for life and time wasted." There is another current remark attributed to him,—that a false quantity at the commencement of the career of a young man intended for public life was rarely got over; and when a lady asked him what a false quantity was, he explained it to be in a man the same as a *faux pas* in a woman.

On leaving Winchester, he was placed for six months at Mont Villiers, in Normandy, to perfect his knowledge of French, and he then went to New College, Oxford, where nothing remarkable is recorded of him, except that he obtained, by virtue of his Winchester honours, first a scholarship, and then a fellowship yielding about 100*l.* a year. No sooner was this limited provision secured, than his father abandoned him to his own resources, which were insufficient, he thought, to justify him in studying for the profession of his choice—the Bar. So, after being within an ace of going out as supercargo to China, he reluctantly made up his mind to enter the Church.

This determination is doubtless to be regretted for his own sake. Besides possessing the talents which are commonly deemed sufficient to insure forensic success, such as acuteness, readiness, boldness, an intuitive knowledge of the springs of action, dialectic skill, and command of language, he was preeminently endowed with the no less indispensable requisites of patience and perseverance.* He would have bided his time. He would neither have been disheartened by neglect, nor have sunk under the sickness of hope deferred, nor have been turned aside by political, social, or literary aspirations, nor have dropped out of the

* When the late Mr. Chitty was consulted by an anxious father about the qualifications for the bar, he asked, "Can your son eat sawdust without butter?"

race because he was disgusted with the jockeyship, or annoyed by the heat, dust, and clamour of the course. He might have turned out a Scarlett at *Nisi Prius*, and an Ellenborough on the Bench. He would also have been spared the sarcasms, galling though ill-founded, so repeatedly levelled at him for trifling with his sacred vocation; for which, in sober seriousness, he entertained the profoundest reverence. But if he had devoted all his energies to the Law—proverbially a jealous mistress—he must have given up to a profession what was meant for mankind, and the world would have lost incalculably by the change.

When it is asked why he did not do what would be done by most aspiring young men similarly situated in our day,—why he did not trust to his pen for supplying the required funds in aid of the income from his fellowship,—the obvious answer is, that sixty years since, reviews and magazines stood on a widely different footing. Their rate of pay to contributors was scanty in the extreme. They were mostly got up for the booksellers by the regular denizens of Grub Street, and a Fellow of New College could hardly have been accused of undue fastidiousness, if he had dismissed at once, assuming it to have occurred to him, the notion of being enrolled in such a troop. Amongst other good effects universally admitted to have resulted from the establishment of this Journal, must be ranked the triumphant vindication of the dignity of our craft. So signal has been our success in this respect, that people find it difficult to imagine a period when it was a moot point in the minor morals, whether a gentleman could receive pecuniary remuneration for an article. Swift quarrelled with Harley for offering to pay him in hard cash for his literary aid in the "Examiner." Lord Jeffrey was visited with misgivings which were not overcome without a struggle. In May, 1803, he writes:—

"The terms are, as Mr. L. says, without precedent; but the success of the work is not less so. . . . All the men here will take their —— guineas, I find, and, under the sanction of that example, I think I may take my Editor's salary also without being supposed to have suffered any degradation."

We quote from Lord Cockburn's Life of Jeffrey, and we learn from the same high authority, that, after three numbers of the Review had been published on the voluntary principle, it was Sydney Smith himself who suggested that no permanent reliance could be placed in amateurs; a sagacious hint, which the late Professor Wilson condensed into his well-known maxim, that "an unpaid contributor is *ex vi termini* an ass." But we are anticipating, and we have not yet brought Mr. Smith to the scene of his earliest labours in the grand cause of civil and religious liberty. We must first accompany him to his curacy in Salisbury Plain, where he underwent the most imminent risk of starvation, mental and bodily.

His parish was Netherhaven, near Amesbury, a village consisting of a few scattered farms and cottages: "once a week a butcher's cart came over from Salisbury; it was then only he could obtain any meat, and he often dined, he said, on a mess of potatoes sprinkled with a little ketchup." Too poor to command books, his only resource was the squire; and his only relaxation, not being able to keep a horse, long walks over those interminable plains, on one of which he narrowly escaped being buried alive in a snow drift. This dreary existence lasted two years, when the squire, Mr. Beech, took a fancy to him, and engaged him as tutor to his eldest son. "It was arranged that I and his son should proceed to the University of Weimar, in Saxony. We set out, but before reaching our destination Germany was disturbed by war, and in stress of politics we put into

Edinburgh, where I remained five years." In 1797, the date of his arrival, this city was in a kind of transition state between two ages or generations, either of which might be excused for designating itself as Augustan. David Hume, Adam Smith, and Robertson were the central figures of the earlier period: Walter Scott, Playfair, Chalmers, and Jeffrey of the later; whilst Mackenzie and Dugald Stewart may be described as connecting links between the two. Or (to apply the beautiful imagery of Burke) before one splendid orb was entirely set, and whilst the horizon was still in a blaze with its descending glory, in an opposite quarter of the heavens arose another luminary, and for its hour became lord of the ascendant. Yet little did the survivors of the Robertsonian circle think of the ample compensation that was in store for them, and scornful, probably, or mistrustful was the passing glance which they cast on the newly discovered stars just beginning to twinkle through the haze.

Besides the indigenous celebrities which, about the end of the last century, the modern Athens was breeding up for her own local attraction and illustration, she had become the chosen resort of several young Englishmen who have since done honour to their training, and proved a source of becoming pride to their nursing mother. Lord Lansdowne, Lord Webb Seymour, Francis Horner, and Lord Brougham belonged to this category, and formed no unimportant addition to the list of new acquaintances, speedily to become valued and lifelong friends, amongst whom Sydney Smith received a ready welcome during his expatriation in the North. On the whole, therefore, the "stress of politics" which compelled him to put into Edinburgh, instead of repairing to Weimar and falling under the influence of Goethe or quizzing him, may have been a fortunate occurrence; and we are by

no means sure that even the solitary confinement of the curacy was time wasted in the long run. Clever and lively companions would have afforded useful instruction for the critic and capital practice for the controversialist; but, as regards the development of his thinking powers, commend us to the lonely meditations of Salisbury Plain.

The Memoir is singularly meagre of information during his five years' sojourn in Edinburgh; and the earliest letter in the selection bears the date of 1801, the fourth year after his arrival there. He was in the thirty-first year of his age when this Review was projected. Are we to infer that so active-minded a man, with his laudable aspirations for distinction and his fertility of resource, was content to let his faculties lie fallow during so protracted an interval, or that he found a satisfactory occupation for them in reading with his pupils, or in metaphysical discussions with his friends? An incident told in connexion with his marriage, which took place some time in 1799, rather adds to the mystery, as proving that the spur of straitened means was amongst his other stimulants to extraordinary exertion. Lady Holland tells us that it was lucky her mother, whose maiden name was Pybus, had some fortune, since her father's only tangible and appreciable contribution towards their future *ménage* were six small silver teaspoons, which, from much wear, had become the ghosts of their former selves. One day, in the madness of his joy, he came running into the room and flung these into her lap, saying, "There, Kate, you lucky girl, I give you all my fortune." In a letter written long after he had left Edinburgh, he exclaims, "When shall I see Scotland again? Never shall I forget the happy days passed there, amidst odious smells, barbarous sounds, bad suppers, excellent hearts, and most enlightened and cultivated understandings."

He did not take the less kindly to the Scotch on account of their alleged insensibility to humour. "It requires," he used to say, "a surgical operation to get a joke well into a Scotch understanding." Charles Lamb stoutly maintained the same doctrine, and we fear that an attempt on our part to dispute it will meet with no better success than the essay of the Edgeworths on Irish Bulls, written to prove that the Irish make no more bulls than other nations, and proving incontestably that they make more than all the other nations of Europe put together. Yet the imputation of insensibility to humour is a curious one to be fixed indelibly on the countrymen of Burns, Walter Scott, Galt, Lockhart, John Wilson, and Peter Robertson. One of our "raws" he was especially fond of rubbing. "Their temper," he writes, "stands anything but an attack on their climate; even the enlightened mind of Jeffrey cannot shake off the illusion that myrtles flourish on Craig Crook. In vain I have represented to him that they are of the genus *Carduus*, and pointed out their prickly peculiarities. He sticks to his myrtle illusions, and treats my attacks with as much contempt as if I had been a wild visionary, who had never breathed his caller air, nor lived and suffered under the rigour of his climate, nor spent five years in discussing metaphysics and medicine in that garret of the earth — that handle-end of England — that land of Calvin, oat-cakes, and sulphur."

The motto which he proposed for this Journal, and his account of its origin, are too familiar to need repetition. He states that the project emanated from him, and that he edited the first Number. This statement has never been contradicted, and is true in the qualified sense in which he meant it to be understood. He had the principal voice in the selection and arrangement of the articles; but according to the

detailed account of the transaction supplied by Lord Jeffrey to Mr. Robert Chambers in 1846, there was no editor, in the modern acceptation of the office, for the first three Numbers. "As many of us as could be got to attend used to meet in a dingy room of Willison's printing-office, in Craig's Court, where the proofs of our own articles were read over and remarked upon, and attempts were made to sit in judgment on the few manuscripts which were then afforded by strangers. But we had seldom patience to go through with these; it was found necessary to have a responsible editor, and the office was pressed upon me. . . . . Smith was by far the most timid of the confederacy, and believed that unless our incognito was strictly maintained we could not go on a day; and this was his object for making us hold our dark divans at Willison's office, to which he insisted on our repairing singly, and by back approaches, or by different lanes!"

Now that the fame of the band, at least of its leading members, rests upon an imperishable basis, such precautions may well seem superfluous; but, without embarking into the wide question of anonymous writing, we may suggest that Sydney had reason on his side. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico.* The only mode of insuring a fair trial was to remain shrouded in mystery at starting; and if anything could have checked the success of the enterprise, it would have been a notification to the public that a set of briefless barristers, unemployed doctors, embryo statesmen, and mute inglorious orators, with the aid of an excurate, were about to electrify the republic of letters and inaugurate a new era in criticism.

Editorial identity differs widely from personal, and, after the lapse of more than half a century, will be found to resemble that of Sir John Cutler's stockings, which was preserved by a succession of renewals.

Sydney Smith's Life could not be written or discussed without revelations which, at an earlier period, might have been indiscreet and egotistical. We therefore make no apology for the foregoing details, nor for quoting the following account of the phenomena which accompanied the birth of this Review:— "It is impossible," remarks Lord Cockburn, "for those who did not live at the time and in the heart of the scene to feel, or almost to understand, the impression made by the new luminary, or the anxieties with which its motions were observed. It was an entire and instant change of everything that the public had been accustomed to in that sort of composition. The old periodical opiates were extinguished at once."

It is also a fact worth noticing, that the first Number, although an apology was offered in the preface for the length of some of the articles, contained twenty-nine, of which seven were from the pen of Sydney Smith — one of these occupying rather less than a page. It professes to be a review of the "Anniversary Sermon of the Royal Humane Society," by W. Langford, D. D., and runs thus:

"An accident, which happened to the gentleman engaged in reviewing this Sermon, proves, in the most striking manner, the importance of this Charity for restoring to life persons in whom the vital power is suspended. He was discovered with Dr. Langford's Discourse lying open before him, in a state of the most profound sleep; from which he could not, by any means, be awakened for a great length of time. By attending, however, to the rules prescribed by the Humane Society, flinging in the smoke of tobacco, applying hot flannels, and carefully removing the Discourse itself to a great distance, the critic was restored to his disconsolate brothers.

"The only account he could give of himself was, that he remembers reading on, regularly, till he came to the following pathetic description of a drowned tradesman; beyond which, he recollects nothing. [Here follows an extract.] This

extract will suffice for the style of the Sermon. The Charity itself is beyond all praise."

This is curious, both as a specimen of Sydney Smith's early manner, and as illustrating the contrast which such a style of criticism must have presented to what Lord Cockburn disrespectfully terms the "old periodical opiates."

Of course the principal contributors were speedily recognised, and had a mark set against their names by the dispensers of public honours and emoluments. Their position has been thus vividly portrayed by their clerical associate: — "From the beginning of the century to the death of Lord Liverpool was an awful period for those who had the misfortune to entertain liberal opinions, and who were too honest to sell them for the ermine of the judge or the lawn of the prelate; a long and hopeless career in your profession,— the chuckling grin of noodles,— the sarcastic leer of the genuine political rogue,— prebendaries, deans, and bishops made over your head, — reverend renegades advanced to the highest dignities of the Church for helping to rivet the fetters of Catholic and Protestant Dissenters, and no more chance of a Whig administration than of a thaw in Zembla,— these were the penalties exacted for liberality of opinion at that period; and not only was there no pay, but there were many stripes. . . . To set on foot such a journal in such times, — to contribute towards it for many years, — to bear patiently the reproach and poverty which it caused,— and to look back and see that I have nothing to retract, and no intemperance and violence to reproach myself with, is a career of life which I must think to be extremely fortunate."

Amongst the subjects which he discussed with a peculiar view to political or social amelioration, were —Catholic Emancipation; Popular, Professional, and

Female Education; Public Schools; University Reform; Church Reform; Methodism; the Game Laws; Spring Guns; Botany Bay; Chimney-Sweepers; Prisons and Prison Discipline; the Poor Laws; Counsel for Prisoners; Indian Missions; Irish Grievances, &c. &c. He not only kept his own contributions free from the revolutionary or democratic tone in politics, and from sceptical tendencies in theological speculation, but amidst all his exuberant jocularity he held close watch over his less guarded associates, and amongst the printed correspondence we find him more than once stating his firm resolve to withdraw from the work if a style of writing which he thought inimical to sound religion were continued. Thus in 1818 he writes to the editor: "I must beg the favour of you to be explicit on one point: do you mean to take care that the Review shall not encourage infidel principles? Unless this is the case, I must absolutely give up all thoughts of connecting myself with it."

On the other hand, he had more than once to defend his guerilla-like inroads into grave subjects, and his dashing onslaughts on respectable bores, against the censures of a whole conclave of serious readers, to whom Jeffrey was prone to listen in his desponding or uncongenial moods. How could Pope venture to lay down as an axiom that "Gentle dulness ever loves a joke?" unless he meant merely that dull people always enjoy their own jokes, which are commonly no laughing matter. Dulness loves nothing that it does not understand, or that startles it, or that ruffles its sense of self-importance. What Pindar said of music, and Coleridge applied to genius, holds equally true of wit or fun: "as many as are not delighted by it, are disturbed, perplexed, irritated." We are consequently not the least astonished to find Sydney Smith driven to the following defence, even at so

advanced a stage of his reputation and authority as 1819:

"My dear Jeffrey,—You must consider that Edinburgh is a very grave place, and that you live with philosophers who are very intolerant of nonsense. I write for the London, not for the Scotch market, and perhaps more people read my nonsense than your sense. The complaint was loud and universal of the extreme dulness and lengthiness of the 'Edinburgh Review.' Too much, I admit, would not do of my style; but the proportion in which it exists enlivens the 'Review,' if you appeal to the whole public, and not to the eight or ten grave Scotchmen with whom you live. I am a very ignorant, frivolous, half-inch person; but, such as I am, I am sure I have done your 'Review' good, and contributed to bring it into notice. Such as I am, I shall be, and cannot promise to alter. Such is my opinion of the effect of my articles. I differ with you entirely about Lieutenant Heude. To do such things very often would be absurd; to punish a man every now and then for writing a frivolous book is wise and proper; and you would find, if you lived in England, that the review of Lieutenant Heude is talked of and quoted for its fun and impertinence, when graver and abler articles are thumbed over and passed by. Almost any one of the sensible men who write for the 'Review' would have written a much wiser and more profound article than I have done upon the Game Laws. I am quite certain nobody would obtain more readers for his essay upon such a subject; and I am equally certain that the principles are *right*, and that there is no lack of sense in it.

"So I judge myself; but, after all, the practical appeal is to you. If you think my assistance of no value, I am too just a man to be angry with you upon that account; but while I write, I must write in my own way."—vol. ii. pp. 181–2.

Sydney Smith ceased to reside in Edinburgh after 1803, and in 1804 we find him settled in Doughty Street, Russell Square, in the midst of a colony of lawyers, the most rising and accomplished of whom, by a natural affinity, were attracted to him. Sir Samuel Romilly, the late Lord Abinger, and Sir

James Mackintosh were the most distinguished; and, amongst other friends, Lady Holland enumerates Dr. Marcet, Mr. Dumont, Mr. Wishaw, Lord Dudley (then Mr. Ward), Mr. Sharpe, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Luttrell, and Mr. Tenant. There was also an old Abbé Dutens, bent on inventing a universal language, who, on Smith's suggesting a few grammatical difficulties, exclaimed,—"Oh non, Monsieur, ce sont là des bagatelles! La seule difficulté que je trouve, c'est de faire agir tous les rois de l'Europe au même temps." The most important of his early social successes was an introduction to Holland House, "the most formidable ordeal," says his daughter, "that a young and obscure man could well go through. He was shy, too, then: yet I believe, in spite of the shyness, they soon discovered and acknowledged his merits, and deemed him no unmeet company for their world. And what a world it was!"

Sydney Smith shy at thirty-three! Theodore Hook also used to complain to his dying day that he had never completely overcome the uncomfortable sensation of entering a room; and an eminent lawlord, the very model of senatorial and judicial eloquence of the composed and dignified order, has been seen to tremble when he rose to address the House of Lords, like a thorough-bred racer when first brought to the starting-post. One obvious solution of this phenomenon is that the delicacy of perception, the exquisite sensibility to impressions, and the impulsiveness, which are essential to humour or eloquence, are almost necessarily accompanied by a certain degree of nervous tremulousness, just as a finely strung harp vibrates at the slightest touch or whenever the faintest breeze passes over it. At all events, leaving the problem to the metaphysicians, we see not the smallest reason for questioning the fact that Sydney Smith did suffer from shyness, although neither com-

parative poverty nor unequal rank ever shook the perfect independence of his bearing in society. He was fond of drawing a ludicrous and (we suspect) overcharged picture of his distresses as a diner-out, when, as he said, he could not afford a hackney coach. Balzac's hero, in a similar predicament, carefully picks his way under the terrible apprehension that an unlucky splash may deprive him of his *soirée*, and leave the field open to a wealthier rival. Sydney Smith, according to his own account, used to carry a pair of dress shoes in his pocket, and change them in the hall. "The servants," he added, "stared at me at first, but I made them laugh, and they got used to me." On hearing of the offence taken by his more fastidious friend Jeffrey at the appearance of a straw (emblematic of the more humble vehicle) on the carpet of some Mrs. Leohunter, he exclaimed, "a straw, a solitary straw! why I have been at literary parties where the floor looked like a stubble-field."

If the fathers of a hundred ruined families could be put to the question or brought to confession, ninety at least of them would own that their primary embarrassments (like those of the Primrose family) arose from the wish to keep up appearances. Vanity would be found to be a more fruitful source of misery than vice. Rochefoucauld strongly inculcates the expediency of learning how to grow old. The art of growing (or of being and seeming) poor is more rarely studied, and more painful to pursue. It was Sydney Smith's constant care to practise and inculcate it. "He never," we are assured by his daughter, "affected to be what he was not; he never concealed the thought, labour, and struggle it often was to him to obtain the simple comforts of life for those he loved: as to its luxuries, he exercised the most rigid self-denial. His favourite motto on such matters was,—'Avoid shame, but do not seek glory—nothing

so expensive as glory;' and this he applied to every detail of his establishment. Nothing could be plainer than his table; yet his society often attracted the wealthy to share his single dish." It is a secret worth knowing in a luxurious metropolis, that nothing is so attractive to the wealthy as a plain dinner and a small party. The noble proprietor of half a dozen princely residences will thank you with an effusion of gratitude for asking him to such a dinner, an occurrence perhaps unique in his long life of aristocratic banqueting. "Better a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." Better a dinner off a joint where good conversation is, than turtle and venison, *entrées* and *entremets*, with dulness, pretension, and pomposity. Of all the stereotyped delusions of the newspapers, we know few more provoking than their daily announcements that some of the stupidest people in town have "entertained" a succession of distinguished guests. It was one of Sydney's own half-serious reflections, that the observances enjoined by the Church were tolerably well kept upon the whole, since the rich kept the feasts and the poor the fasts. But he left out of the account the intellectual fasts to which the richest of the rich submit by way of self-imposed penance for their superfluities.

Still, although a good deal of rational enjoyment may be extracted from a scanty income, it does not follow that we should remain poor longer than we can help. One of the most creditable passages Junius ever wrote was his advice to Woodfall: "Let all your views in life be directed to a solid, however moderate, independence; without it no man can be happy, nor even honest." What can be more touching than the scene in the "Life of Sheridan," where

> "The orator, dramatist, statesman, who ran
> Through each mode of the lyre and was master of all,"

bursts into tears when reproached for some imputed political backsliding, exclaiming, that it was all very well for his noble friends, with their tens, twenties, or fifty thousands a year, to taunt a man whose whole life had been one of struggle and embarrassment? We have heard Sydney Smith revert to this incident, and avow his cordial concurrence in the axiom of a fellow-passenger in a stage-coach,—"Poverty, sir, is no disgrace to a man, but it's confoundedly inconvenient." In his letters he fairly owns that every guinea he was enabled to add to his growing fortune was a gratification to him.

His preaching had been much admired, both at Edinburgh and London; and one of his projects, about 1805, for gaining money, was to take the lease of a chapel then occupied by a set of Dissenters called the New Jerusalem, and run the chance of increasing his pew-rents by his popularity. Four years before, he had unfolded his views of what pulpit oratory was, and what it might become without losing any of its indispensable solemnity. "The English, generally remarkable for doing very good things in a very bad manner, seem to have reserved the maturity and plenitude of their awkwardness for the pulpit. Is it wonder, then, that every semi-delirious sectary who pours forth his animated nonsense with the genuine look and voice of passion, should gesticulate away the congregation of the most profound and learned divine of the Established Church, *and in two Sundays preach him bare to the very sexton?* . . . . . Why this holoplexia on sacred occasions alone? Why call in the aid of paralysis to piety? Is it a rule of oratory to balance the style against the subject, and to handle the most sublime truths in the dullest language and the driest manner? *Is sin to be taken from men as Eve was from Adam, by casting them into a deep slumber?*"

It was his wish to enter the field against the semi-delirious sectary; but for this purpose he required a license from the rector of the parish in which the chapel lay, and this was politely but peremptorily declined. Sydney was much annoyed; his family shared his indignation, and his affectionate biographer implies that he was cruelly wronged. "I appeal to you again," he wrote, addressing the rector, whose name is suppressed, "whether anything can be so enormous and unjust as that that privilege should be denied to the ministers of the Church of England, which every man who has folly and presumption enough to differ from it can immediately enjoy." He who is his own advocate has a fool for a client, is a sound though homely adage. Its literal application to Sydney Smith, in his most incautious moments, would be preposterous; but it is instructive to mark how a man of his intellectual culture could be blinded by eagerness in the pursuit of a favourite object to the palpable unsoundness of his argument. The essential end and object of a church establishment are to prevent this very description of competition which he claims as the inalienable privilege of its ministers. "With what sincerity, or with what dignity," asks Paley, "can a preacher dispense truths of Christianity, whose thoughts are perpetually solicited to the reflection how he may increase his subscription? His eloquence, if he possess any, resembles rather the exhibition of a player who is computing the profits of his theatre." *

> "The drama's laws the drama's patrons give,
> And those who live to please, must please to live."

The late lamented Charles Buller, improving on a

* "*Wagner.* I have often heard say, a player might instruct a priest.
"*Faust.* Yes, when the priest is a player, as may likely enough come to pass occasionally." — *Goethe's Faust.*

suggestion of Swift's, proposed to organise a body of dignitaries and ministers of the Church of England, to be called "The Church Moveable," or "The Clergy Unattached;" so that whenever the sectaries were gaining ground in any given district, a bishop's or a dean's party might be sent down to encounter them, as we despatch a captain's or subaltern's party to prevent a political outbreak. But he did not propose to increase their pay in proportion to the number of Dissenters they led captive. On what ground did Sydney Smith himself propose to settle a State provision on the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland? Was it not in the hope of rendering them independent of their flocks, and of taking away the pecuniary temptation to turbulence?

In 1804, 1805, and 1806 were delivered at the Royal Institution the Lectures first printed for private circulation by Mrs. Sydney Smith in 1849, and subsequently published under the title of "Elementary Sketches of Moral Philosophy." They were eminently and deservedly popular. "His success," wrote Horner during their delivery, "has been beyond all possible conjecture; from six to eight hundred hearers; not a seat to be procured, even if you go there an hour before the time. Nobody else, to be sure, could have executed such an undertaking with the least chance of success. For who else could make such a mixture of odd paradox, quaint fun, manly sense, liberal opinions, and striking language?" The portions of the series which attracted most attention were the two lectures on "Wit and Humour," in which he broached the startling doctrines that "the feeling of wit is occasioned by those relations of ideas which excite surprise, and surprise *alone*," and that wit might be acquired by study, like mathematics:

"It is imagined that wit is a sort of inexplicable visitation, that it comes and goes with the rapidity of lightning, and

that it is quite as unattainable as beauty or just proportion. I am so much of a contrary way of thinking, that I am convinced a man might sit down as systematically, and as successfully, to the study of wit, as he might to the study of mathematics: and I would answer for it that, by giving up only six hours a day to being witty, he should come on prodigiously before Midsummer, so that his friends should hardly know him again. For what is there to hinder the mind from gradually acquiring a habit of attending to the lighter relations of ideas in which wit consists? Punning grows upon everybody, and punning is the wit of words. I do not mean to say that it is so easy to acquire a habit of discovering new relations in ideas as in words, but the difficulty is not so much greater as to render it insuperable to habit. One man is unquestionably much better calculated for it by nature than another; but association, which gradually makes a bad speaker a good one, might give a man wit who had it not, if any man chose to be so absurd as to sit down to acquire it."

Why absurd, if the object were really attainable by study, and the man had no better or more urgent employment or pursuit?

The peroration of the second of these two lectures is very striking:

"There is an association in men's minds between dulness and wisdom, amusement and folly, which has a very powerful influence in decision upon character, and is not overcome without considerable difficulty. The reason is, that the *outward* signs of a dull man and a wise man are the same, and so are the outward signs of a frivolous man and a witty man; and we are not to expect that the majority will be disposed to look to much *more* than the outward sign. I believe the fact to be, that wit is very seldom the *only* eminent quality which resides in the mind of any man; it is commonly accompanied by many other talents of every description, and ought to be considered as a strong evidence of a fertile and superior understanding. Almost all the great poets, orators, and statesmen of all times, have been witty. Cæsar, Alexander, Aristotle, Descartes, and Lord Bacon, were witty men; so were Cicero, Shakspeare, Demosthenes, Boileau,

Pope, Dryden, Fontenelle, Jonson, Waller, Cowley, Solon, Socrates, Dr. Johnson, and almost every man who has made a distinguished figure in the House of Commons. . . . . The meaning of an extraordinary man is, that he is *eight* men, not one man; that he has as much wit as if he had no sense, and as much sense as if he had no wit; that his conduct is as judicious as if he were the dullest of human beings, and his imagination as brilliant as if he were irretrievably ruined. But when wit is combined with sense and information; when it is softened by benevolence, and restrained by strong principle; when it is in the hands of a man who can use it and despise it, who can be witty, and something much *better* than witty, who loves honour, justice, decency, good-nature, morality, and religion, ten thousand times better than wit;—wit is *then* a beautiful and delightful part of our nature. There is no more interesting spectacle than to see the effects of wit upon the different characters of men; than to observe it expanding caution, relaxing dignity, unfreezing coldness, —teaching age, and care, and pain, to smile,—extorting reluctant gleams of pleasure from melancholy, and charming even the pangs of grief. It is pleasant to observe how it penetrates through the coldness and awkwardness of society, gradually bringing men nearer together, and, like the combined force of wine and oil, giving every man a glad heart and a shining countenance. Genuine and innocent wit like this, is surely the *flavour of the mind!* Man could direct his ways by plain reason, and support his life by tasteless food; but God has given us wit, and flavour, and laughter, and perfumes, to enliven the days of man's pilgrimage, and to 'charm his pained steps over the burning marle.'"

There cannot be a more striking proof of the slenderness of the provision made for the reward or encouragement of intellectual eminence in this country, than the fact that Sydney Smith, with this fulness of reputation, and with his political friends in power, felt compelled to accept the small living of Foston-le-Clay in Yorkshire, which was with some difficulty obtained, through the exertions of Lord and Lady Holland, from the Whig Chancellor, Lord Erskine. Again, however, we maintain, that his

character and reputation have rather gained than suffered by what he felt as a severe infliction at the time. His second or third banishment, with its concomitants, brought out into broad relief the finest points of his understanding and his heart. Buffon somewhere defines or describes genius as a superior aptitude to patience. May not goodness and virtue be resolved into the same element, when an uncongenial course of life is deliberately adopted, and a host of privations and (if you please, petty) miseries are knowingly encountered from a genuine and profound sense of duty?—"A diner-out, a wit, and a popular preacher," to borrow his own graphic picture of his situation, "I was suddenly caught up by the Archbishop of York, and transported to my living in Yorkshire, where there had not been a resident clergyman for a hundred and fifty years. Fresh from London, not knowing a turnip from a carrot, I was compelled to farm three hundred acres, and (without capital) to build a parsonage-house." . . .

"It made me a very poor man for many years, but I never repented it. I turned schoolmaster, to educate my son, as I could not afford to send him to school. Mrs. Sydney turned schoolmistress, to educate my girls, as I could not afford a governess. I turned farmer, as I could not let my land. A man-servant was too expensive; so I caught up a little garden-girl, made like a milestone, christened her Bunch, put a napkin in her hand, and made her my butler. The girls taught her to read, Mrs. Sydney to wait, and I undertook her morals; Bunch became the best butler in the county.

"I had little furniture, so I bought a cart-load of deals; took a carpenter (who came to me for parish relief, called Jack Robinson), with a face like a full-moon, into my service; established him in a barn, and said, 'Jack, furnish my house.' You see the result.

"At last it was suggested that a carriage was much wanted in the establishment; after diligent search, I discovered in the back settlements of a York coachmaker an ancient green chariot, supposed to have been the earliest invention of the

kind. I brought it home in triumph to my admiring family. Being somewhat dilapidated, the village tailor lined it, the blacksmith repaired it; nay, (but for Mrs. Sydney's earnest entreaties,) we believe the village painter would have exercised his genius upon the exterior; it escaped this danger, however, and the result was wonderful. Each year added to its charms: it grew younger and younger; a new wheel, a new spring; I christened it the *Immortal;* it was known all over the neighbourhood; the village boys cheered it, and the village dogs barked at it; but *Faber meæ fortunæ* was my motto, and we had no false shame.

"Added to all these domestic cares, I was village parson, village doctor, village comforter, village magistrate, and Edinburgh Reviewer; so you see I had not much time left on my hands to regret London.

"My house was considered the ugliest in the county, but all admitted it was one of the most comfortable; and we did not die, as our friends had predicted, of the damp walls of the parsonage." — vol. i. pp. 159–60.

Should any reader have felt disposed to question the advantage of having an accomplished and high-minded daughter, bred up at her father's feet and imbued with his noble spirit, for the biographer of such a man, their doubts will vanish into thin air before they have half finished the seventh chapter, describing the building of the Foston Parsonage, and the arrival of the family to take possession of their new residence. Vividly as some familiar scenes in the "Vicar of Wakefield" are recalled to us by the magic of association, there is no actual likeness, and there are freshness and novelty in every one of Lady Holland's indelible and faithfully recorded impressions and details:

"But oh, the shout of joy as we entered and took possession! — the first time in our lives that we had inhabited a house of our own. How we admired it, ugly as it was! With what pride my dear father welcomed us, and took us from room to room! old Molly Mills, the milkwoman, who had charge of the house, grinning with delight in the back-

ground. We thought it a palace: yet the drawingroom had no door, the bare plaster walls ran down with wet, the windows were like ground glass from the moisture, which had to be wiped up several times a day by the housemaid. No carpets, no chairs, nothing unpacked; rough men bringing in rougher packages at every moment. But then was the time to behold my father! — amid the confusion, he thought for everybody, cared for everybody, encouraged everybody, kept everybody in good-humour. "How he exerted himself! how his loud rich voice might be heard in all directions, ordering, arranging, explaining, till the household storm gradually subsided! Each half-hour improved our condition; fires blazed in every room; at last we all sat down to our tea, spread by ourselves on a huge package before the drawingroom fire, sitting on boxes round it; and retired to sleep on our beds placed on the floor; — the happiest, merriest, and busiest family in Christendom." — vol. i. p. 162.

If Molly Mills, Annie Kay, Bunch, and Jack Robinson could be transplanted into one of Mr. Thackeray's or Mr. Dickens's monthly numbers, with appropriate parts, their names would speedily become as familiar in men's mouths as household words, whilst Bitty, the pet donkey, is a study for a Sterne. Although, as Sydney Smith admits, visions of croziers did occasionally cross his waking dreams, all his plans were formed on the hypothesis of his remaining rector of Foston for life. The event nearly justified his prevision; he remained there twenty-two years, and was at length removed to a more fitting sphere, not by the aid or through the instrumentality of those for and with whom he had combated, but by Lord Lyndhurst, "who," says Lady Holland, "had the real friendship and courage to brave the opinions and opposition of his own party, and, though differing from my father in politics, to bestow on him a stall which was then vacant at Bristol." Yet a ministry (the Coalition or Junction Ministry) had been formed in 1827, some of whose prominent mem-

bers or influential supporters might have remembered how much "Peter Plymley" had contributed to advance that very question which was their sole or main bond of union. From a letter addressed to one of these, whose name is omitted, we collect that he was disappointed and deeply hurt at their neglect, as well he might be; nor can we satisfactorily account for it, even after making all reasonable allowance for the meanest motives which can actuate the dispensers of patronage. We are well aware that the gratitude of statesmen may be most especially designated as a lively sense of favours or services to come. New partisans are constantly entering the arena:

"Then what they do in present,
Though less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours."

But Sydney Smith had still his tongue and pen. It could not be said of *him*, — "It is lucky he has arrived at the place of his destination, for the horses are off." There were few public men who could afford to profess indifference to his praise or blame; and an opportune pamphlet or article from him, at a critical period or in a balanced state of parties, might make or mar a Minister. But the Whig or Liberal debt was left unpaid till 1831, when, by way of tardy instalment, he was appointed to a prebendal stall at St. Paul's by Lord Grey.*

One of the first things, we are told in a note, which Lord Grey said on entering Downing Street, was, "Now I shall be able to do something for Sydney Smith." Then why was not more done for him? Lord Melbourne is reported to have said that there was nothing he more regretted than the not having made Sydney Smith a bishop. This has been denied

* It has been suggested that the terms in which Sydney Smith, in concert with Lord Grey, spoke of the Junction Ministry, and his uniform abuse of Canning, may account for his being passed over in 1827.

on good authority; but Lord John Russell writes, — "My dear Sydney, I think you are quite right not to be ambitious of the prelacy, as it would lead to much disquiet for you; but, if I had entirely my own way in these matters, you should have the opportunity of refusing it." At a long antecedent period, Lord Holland thus anticipates the only plausible objection, —

"My dear Sydney,— I wish you could have heard my conversation with Lord Grenville the other day, and the warm and enthusiastic way in which he spoke of 'Peter Plymley.' I did not fail to remind him that the only author to whom we both thought it could be compared in English, lost a bishopric for his wittiest performance; and I hoped that, if we could discover the author, and had ever a bishopric in our gift, we should prove that Whigs were both more grateful and more liberal than Tories."

Yet the Whigs, we speak it with sorrow, left the initiative to the Tories, and indirectly sanctioned the prejudices or calumnies which the most eminent of them repelled, discredited, and despised. We sympathise with the biographer in her protest against any comparison, except in purely mental qualities, with the Dean of St. Patrick's; but we have little doubt that there was a solid foundation for the limited parallel suggested by Lord Holland, although Sydney was not

"By an old murderess pursued,
A crazy prelate, and a royal prude."

The persons indicated in this vindictive couplet are the Duchess of Somerset, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Queen Anne. In the "Windsor Prophecy," the Duchess is ridiculed for the redness of her hair, and upbraided as having been privy to the murder of her first husband. It was doubted, suggests Scott, which imputation she accounted the more cruel insult, especially since the first charge

was undeniable, and the second only arose from the malice of the poet. At her instigation, the Archbishop tried to prevent Swift's promotion by questioning his orthodoxy, and when his Grace had failed, she succeeded, by dint of tears and supplications, in inducing her royal mistress to refuse the expected bishopric. The beautiful Duchess who filled the corresponding post in the English Court when Sydney Smith's claims (which, we fear, never came so nigh the ear of Majesty) were preferred, would have been more likely to weep at their rejection; yet some one certainly attempted to play, with the Premier, the part which the "crazy prelate" vainly attemped with Queen Anne. Lady Holland quotes a letter from her father to Lord John Russell, in which (April, 1837) he writes—"I defy —— to quote one single passage of my writing contrary to the doctrines of the Church. I defy him to mention a single action of my life which he can call immoral. The only thing he could charge me with would be high spirits and much innocent nonsense. I am distinguished as a preacher, and sedulous as a parochial clergyman. His real charge is, that I am a high-spirited, honest, uncompromising man, whom all the bench of bishops could not turn, and who would set them all at defiance upon great and vital questions. This is the reason why (as far as depends upon others) I am not a bishop; but I am thoroughly sincere in saying I would not take any bishopric whatever, and to this I pledge my honour and character as a gentleman. But, had I been a bishop, you would have seen me on a late occasion, charging —— and —— with a gallantry which would have warmed your heart's blood, and made Melbourne rub the skin off his hands."

Two years before his death he reverted to this subject in conversation with the writer, in his garden

at Combe Florey. "They showed a want of moral courage, in not making me a bishop," was his remark, "but I must own that it required a good deal. *They* know, *you* know, all who have lived or talked much with me must know, that I should have devoted myself heart and soul to my duties, and that the episcopal dignity would have sustained no loss in my keeping. But I have only myself to blame if I have been misunderstood."

His letters will amply vindicate his memory from the charge of thinking lightly on serious or sacred subjects. His critics forget that one of the finest observers who ever lived, has defined gravity as a mystery of the body for concealing the emptiness of the mind. Erasmus wrote an essay in praise of folly. Sir Thomas More jested on the scaffold, and his alleged levity is the theme of one of Addison's most admired papers:— "The innocent mirth, which had been so conspicuous in his life, did not forsake him to the last. His death was of a piece with his life: there was nothing in it new, forced, or affected." Forced gravity, out of keeping with the known character, would afford better ground for cavil or suspicion than habitual vivacity, which only superficial observers can mistake for insensibility or indifference; and if compelled to choose between the laughing and the crying schools of moralists, we should award the palm of trustworthiness to the disciples of Democritus.

In default of an episcopal palace, Sydney Smith removed, in 1828, to Combe Florey, near Taunton, which he soon converted into one of the most comfortable and delightful of parsonages. The house was situated in a picturesque little valley, at the end of which was a wood with pleasant walks cut through it. The climate was warm and soft, and he was wont to expatiate on its merits in a style somewhat resem-

bling Lord Jeffrey's myrtle delusions at Craig Crook. On one occasion, when some London visitors were expected, he called in art to aid nature, and caused oranges to be tied to the shrubs in the drive and garden. The stratagem succeeded admirably, and great was his exultation when an unlucky urchin from the village was detected in the act of sucking one through a quill. It was as good, he said, as the birds pecking at Zeuxis' grapes, or the donkeys munching Jeffrey's supposed myrtles for thistles. Another time, on a lady's happening to hint that the pretty paddock would be improved by deer, he fitted his two donkeys with antlers, and placed them with their extraordinary head-gear immediately in front of the windows. The effect, enhanced by the puzzled looks of the animals, was ludicrous in the extreme.

But in his most frolicsome moods he never practised what is called practical joking, agreeing in opinion on this topic with the late Marquess of Hertford, who checked a party of ingenious tormentors at Sudbourn with the remark, that the human mind was various, and that there was no knowing how much melted butter a gentleman would bear in his pocket without quarreling. There was one practical joke, however, which Sydney admitted he should like to see repeated, if only as an experiment in physics and metaphysics. It was the one played off in the last century on a Mr. O'Brien, whose bedroom windows were carefully boarded up, so that not a ray of light could penetrate. When he rang his bell in the morning, a servant appeared, half dressed and yawning, with a candle, and anxiously asked if he was ill. Ashamed of the fancied irregularity, the patient recomposed himself to sleep, but at the end of a couple of hours rang again, and again the same pantomime was enacted. "Open the shutters." They were opened, and all without was as dark as a wolf's

mouth. He was kept in bed till driven to desperation by hunger, when rushing out upon the landing-place, he found that he had only just time to dress for a late dinner.

There was one kind of mystification in which Sydney Smith shone preeminent,—that of which the pretended extract from an old Dutch Chronicle, quoted in his first letter to Archdeacon Singleton, is an amusing specimen. Still better was the report supplied by him to a Yorkshire paper, of the alleged trial of a farmer at the Northamptonshire Sessions for keeping a savage dog, and the sentence of imprisonment, with hard labour and private whipping, passed upon the offender. The effect, he said, was wonderful, and the reign of Cerberus closed in the land. "That accounts," remarked Lord Spencer, on hearing him relate the story, "for what has puzzled me and Althorp for many years. We never failed to attend the Sessions at Northampton, and we never could find out how we had missed this remarkable dog case." Even editorial dignity and credulity were sometimes ruthlessly trifled with. The publication named at the head of his article on "Counsel for Prisoners," had no existence except in his own creative fancy.

When Sydney Smith first settled in Yorkshire, he was in the habit of riding a good deal. About this time he writes:—"I used to think a fall from a horse dangerous, but much experience has convinced me to the contrary. I have had six falls in two years, and just behaved like the three per cents when they fall,—I got up again, and am not a bit the worse for it, any more than the stock in question." "At a later period," he says, "I left off riding for the good of my family; for somehow or other my horse and I had had a habit of parting company. On one occasion I found myself suddenly prostrate in the

streets of York, much to the delight of the Dissenters. Another time my horse Calamity flung me over his head into a neighbouring parish, as if I had been a shuttlecock, and I felt grateful it was not into a neighbouring planet."

The late Charles Matthews having had his limbs fractured two or three times by falls from gigs, vowed never to enter one again unless he was first satisfied, by ocular demonstration, that the horse would bear the sawing of the reins under his tail without kicking. Sydney Smith had an equal horror of this description of vehicle, and maintained that, as regarded the prolongation of human life, the invention of gigs had more than counterbalanced the discovery of vaccination. According to Mr. Apperly (Nimrod), a hunting parson makes friends, a shooting parson makes enemies. Sydney Smith tells us that he gave up shooting, first, "because I found, on trying at Lord Grey's, that the birds seemed to consider the muzzle of my gun as their safest position; secondly, because I never could help shutting my eyes when I fired my gun, so was not likely to improve; and thirdly, because, if you do shoot, the squire and the poacher both consider you as their natural enemy, and I thought it more clerical to be at peace with both."

In an argument with a serious baronet, who objected to clerical sporting in the abstract, he stood up for angling. "I give up fly-fishing: it is a light, volatile, dissipated pursuit. But ground-bait, with a good steady float that never bobs without a bite, is an occupation for a bishop, and in no ways interferes with sermon-making." He once discovered some tench in a pond at Sandhill Park (a seat of the Lethbridges close to Combe Foley), and kept the secret till he had caught every one of them (an exploit requiring several days), when he loudly triumphed over

the fisherman of the family. Writing to Lady Grey, he says, "his (John Grey's) refusal of the living of Sunbury convinces me that he is not fond of gudgeon-fishing. I had figured to myself you and Lord Grey, and myself, engaged in that occupation upon the river Thames."

Lady Holland's description of a morning at Combe Florey may form a companion picture for her sketch of the arrival of the family at Foston: —

"The room, an oblong, was, as I have already described, surrounded on three sides by books, and ended in a bay-window opening into the garden: not brown, dark, dull-looking volumes, but all in the brightest bindings; for he carried his system of furnishing for gaiety even to the dress of his books.

"He would come down into this long low room in the morning like a 'giant refreshed to run his course,' bright and happy as the scene around him. 'Thank God for Combe Florey!' he would exclaim, throwing himself into his red arm-chair, and looking round; 'I feel like a bridegroom in the honeymoon.' And in truth I doubt if ever bridegroom felt so joyous, or at least made others feel so joyous, as he did on these occasions. 'Ring the bell, Saba;' the usual refrain, by the by, in every pause, for he contrived to keep everybody actively employed around him, and nobody ever objected to be so employed. 'Ring the bell, Saba.' Enter the servant, D——, 'D——, glorify the room.' This meant that the three Venetian windows of the bay were to be flung open, displaying the garden on every side, and letting in a blaze of sunshine and flowers. D—— glorifies the room with the utmost gravity, and departs. 'You would not believe it,' he said, 'to look at him now, but D—— is a reformed Quaker. Yes, he quaked, or did quake; his brother quakes still: but D—— is now thoroughly orthodox. I should not like to be a Dissenter in his way; he is to be one of my vergers at St. Paul's some day. Lady B—— calls them my virgins. She asked me the other day, "Pray, Mr. Smith, is it true that you walk down St. Paul's with three virgins holding silver pokers before you?" I shook my head, and looked very grave, and bid her come and see.' Some enemy of the Church, some Dissenter, had clearly been misleading her.'

"'There now,' sitting down at the breakfast-table, 'take a lesson of economy. You never breakfasted in a parsonage before, did you? There, you see, my china is all white, so if broken can always be renewed; the same with my plates at dinner: did you observe my plates? every one a different pattern, some of them *sweet articles;* it was a pleasure to dine upon such a plate as I had last night. It is true, Mrs. Sydney, who is a great herald, is shocked because some of them have the arms of a royal duke or a knight of the garter on them; but that does not signify to me. My plan is to go into a china-shop and bid them show me every plate they have which does not cost more than half a crown; you see the result.'

"'I think breakfast so pleasant because no one is conceited before one o'clock.'

"Mrs. Marcet admired his ham. 'Oh,' said he, 'our hams are the only true hams; yours are Shems and Japhets.'" —vol. i. pp. 331–3.

A good deal of this may be nonsense, as no one knew better than himself; but it is cheerful, sparkling, joy-inspiring nonsense, such as none but a good, happy, right-minded, highly cultivated, and very clever man could talk. Rousseau, the antipodes of the rector of Combe Florey, also professed "un goût vif pour les déjeûners. C'est le temps de la journée où nous sommes le plus tranquilles, où nous causons le plus à notre aise." The memory of Mr. Rogers's breakfasts will last as long as that of Madame du Deffand's suppers; but the fame of colloquial meetings is commonly lowered rather than exalted by description; and we are sorry that Lady Holland has called in the aid of note-taking friends and admirers to confirm her impressions of the Combe Florey "feasts of reason and flow of soul" by their reminiscences.

"Eloquence," says Bolingbroke, "must flow like a stream that is fed by an abundant spring, and not spout forth a little frothy water on some gaudy day, and remain dry the rest of the year." So must humour, and Sydney Smith's was so fed; yet it was

seldom overpowering, and never exhausting, except by the prolonged fits of laughter which it provoked. Although in one of his letters already quoted he calls himself a diner-out, he had none of the prescriptive attributes of that now happily almost extinct tribe. He had no notion of talking for display. He talked because he could not help it; because his spirits were excited, and his mind was full. He consciously or unconsciously, too, abided by Lord Chesterfield's rule, "Pay your own reckoning, but do not treat the whole company; this being one of the very few cases in which people do not care to be treated, every one being fully convinced that he has wherewithal to pay." His favourite maxim (copied from Swift) was "take as many half-minutes as you can get, but never talk more than half a minute without pausing and giving others an opportunity to strike in." He vowed that Buchon, a clever and amiable man of letters who talked on the opposite principle, was the identical Frenchman who murmured as he was anxiously watching a rival, "S'il crache ou tousse, il est perdu."

Far from being jealous of competition, he was always anxious to dine in company with men who were able and entitled to hold their own; and he was never pleasanter than when some guest of congenial turn of mind assisted him to keep up the ball. On the occasion of the first attempt (at the writer's chambers in the Temple) to bring him and Theodore Hook together, Lockhart arrived with the information that Hook was priming himself (as was his wont) at the Athenæum Club, with a tumbler or two of hot punch. "Oh," exclaimed Sydney, "if it comes to that, let us start fair. When Mr. Hook is announced, announce Mr. Smith's punch." When they did meet they contracted a mutual liking, and Sydney ran on with his usual flow and felicity; but poor Hook had arrived at that period of his life when his wonderful powers

required a greater amount of stimulants than could be decently imbibed at an ordinary London dinner with a clergyman.

Sydney Smith almost invariably made it his special business to call out and encourage the display of any latent elements of information or agreeability in any silent, unobtrusive, or abashed member of the company. At the same time, he by no means disliked mixing with what he called commonplace, humdrum people, endowed with only an indistinct perception of a joke; and he rightly conceived that he had done the State good service by the invention of the "Fool-ometer." In 1818 we find him writing to Earl Grey: "I will send Lady Grey the news from London when I get there. I am sure she is too wise a woman not to be fond of gossiping. I am fond of it, and have some talents for it." It formed in his opinion an excellent foundation for the more elevated order of social intercourse; since conversation, like singing, if commenced in too high a key, is apt to get over-strained and out of tune. No one knew better how and when to turn from gay to grave. There was always plenty of bread to his sack. His intellectual larder in no respect resembled that of the Prince in the fairy tale, which contained nothing but cream tarts, with or without pepper. There was abundance of plain wholesome food to be found in Sydney's, which was frequently served up without sauce or condiment to the guest who was fortunate enough to be his companion in a ride or walk; when the coruscations of his humour were relieved, not by flashes of silence, but by the moonlight beams of good feeling and good sense.

When he stopped to give directions to his servants or labourers he was well worth listening to. On it being pointed out to him that his gardener was tearing off too many of the leaves of a vine, he told

him to desist. The man, a Scotchman, looked unconvinced. "Now, understand me," he continued; "you are probably right, but I don't wish you to do what is right; and as it is my vine, and there are no moral laws for pruning, you may as well do as I wish." Sir Henry Holland's high authority is adduced in favour of Sydney's medical knowledge; but we have our doubts whether the health of either Foston or Combe Florey was improved by the indulgence of his hobby in this particular. A composition of blue-pill which he was glad to "dart into the intestines" of any luckless wight whom he could induce to swallow it, sometimes operated in a manner which he had not anticipated. One morning, at Combe Florey, a regular practitioner from Taunton, who had been going his weekly round and was considerately employed to overlook the serious cases, came in with rather a long face and stated that an elderly woman, who had been taking the pill during several consecutive nights for the lumbago, complained that her gums were sore, and he therefore advised the discontinuance of it. A London visitor, who had tried it once, began to titter; and Sydney, after attempting a weak apology for his practice, heartily joined in the laugh, exclaiming: "What a story you will make of this, when you next breakfast with Rogers, and how he and Luttrell will triumph in it!"

Soon afterwards he wrote to inquire about the capabilities of a medical gentleman.

"Dec. 11, 1843. Combe Florey, Taunton.

"Dear Hayward,—Do you know anything of the Esculapius of Lyme Regis? Does he march in the path of rhubarb? Can he remove a limb? Does he know his way in the bowels? Can he see in the cæcum? Can he remove a full stop in the colon? Is his practice right in the rectum? In plain prose, do you know anything about him, and is he fit for the office he is desirous to fill?

"I am here without motive, without excitement, in a state of quiet which I hate, and amongst the beauties of nature for which I have little taste. I envy you the dirt, the hurricane, and malignity in which (as all London people) you live.

"Ever truly yours,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

"If you come to the West to see your father, or, as the Scotch call him, your *cause*, and will bestow a day upon us, we shall be very glad to see you."

The rapidity with which reading men, particularly critics and those who read for a purpose, get over the ground, has often astonished persons unpractised in the art. Dr. Johnson has been described as tearing out the heart of a book, and he seldom read one fairly through. Sydney Smith's mode of reading must have been equally quick, for we find him writing to Lady Grey:—"I recommend you to read Hall's, Palmer's, Fearon's, and Bradling's, 'Travels in America,' particularly Fearon's; these four books may, with ease, be read through between breakfast and dinner." The truth is, any one accustomed to composition, and conversant with the subject, can see at a glance whether a new author has contributed anything valuable or curious to the preexisting stock of thought or knowledge, and will fasten intuitively on the passages which contain the pith of the work. Rare are the cases in which the packing and stuffing, the beating about the bush and the amplification, do not constitute the larger half of the publication.

In this cursory fashion, he contrived to acquire a general knowledge of the recent and more popular discoveries in physical science, especially geology; and held its leading professors in high honour, although he was wont to make them the object of a little harmless raillery. The following letter was addressed to Mr. (now Sir Roderick) Murchison, whilst he was attending the British Association during its first meeting

at Glasgow under the presidency of the Marquess of Breadalbane.

"Combe Florey, 1840.

"Dear Murchison,— Many thanks for your kind recollections of me in sending me your pamphlet, which I shall read with all attention and care. My observation has been necessarily so much fixed on missions of another description, that I am hardly reconciled to zealots going out with voltaic batteries and crucibles, for the conversion of mankind, and baptizing their fellow-creatures with the mineral acids; but I will endeavour to admire, and believe in you. My real alarm for you is, that, by some late decisions of the magistrates, you come under the legal definition of *strollers;* and nothing would give me more pain than to see any of the Sections upon the mill, calculating the resistance of the air, and showing the additional quantity of flour which might be ground *in vacuo,* — each man in the meantime imagining himself a Galileo.

"Mrs. Sydney has eight distinct illnesses, and I have nine. We take something every hour, and pass the mixture from one to the other.

"About forty years ago, I stopped an infant in Lord Breadalbane's grounds, and patted his face. The nurse said, 'Hold up your head, Lord Glenorchy.' This was the President of your society. He seems to be acting an honourable and enlightened part in life. Pray present my respects to him and his beautiful marchioness.

"SYDNEY SMITH.

"Since writing this, I have read your Memoir, — a little too flowery, but very sensible and good."

He was too liberal and enlightened a divine to believe that sound religion could be shaken or undermined by the diffusion of truth, and, when the cry of Moses against Murchison was raised at York, he gallantly sided with the geologist. He practised the toleration which he preached. In his speech on the Catholic Claims, at a meeting of the clergy in the East Riding, he says: "My excellent and respectable curate, Mr. Milestones, alarmed at the effect of the Pope upon the East Riding, has come here to oppose me; and there he stands breathing war and ven-

geance on the Vatican. We had some previous conversation on this subject; and, in imitation of our superiors, we agreed not to make it a cabinet question."

Sydney Smith's mode of writing may be guessed. His sentences were not painfully elaborated, drop by drop, like Fox's, nor his proofs corrected three or four times over, like Burke's. His articles were obviously more than half composed before he proceeded to commit them to paper. But he was by no means devoid of the common sensitiveness to editorial emendation; and he more than once complains of Jeffrey for spoiling his jokes.

He was fond of good eating, and kept an excellent table as soon as he could afford it. His well-known recipe for salad contains two lines which his friend Luttrell might have envied:

> "Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl,
> And, scarce suspected, animate the whole."

He insisted on warmth as indispensable to convivial or social enjoyment, and was wont to contend that compatibility of temperature was as necessary to domestic happiness as compatibility of temper. He liked a profusion of light, and complained that Rogers's dining-room, in which the light was reflected from the pictures, was a place of "darkness and gnashing of teeth." Amongst his personal peculiarities, it deserves to be recorded that he much preferred conversation to music, although endowed with a good ear, and that he had a strong dislike to theatres and theatrical entertainments.

The old rules of evidence should be strictly enforced as regards Sydney Smith. No hearsay versions of his sayings should be admissible. It is really too bad to have inaccurate versions of Charles Fox's well-known comment on Thurlow's countenance, Thurlow's equally familiar remark on corporations, Joseph Hume's application of the term "allegator" to Sir

Robert Peel, Lord Ellenborough's jokes on the stammering barrister and the yawning peer, with reported sayings of Luttrell, and notorious instances of the late Lord Dudley's or Mr. Bowles's absence of mind, deliberately set down and printed as specimens of Sydney Smith's conversational felicity. So long as the biographer trusts to her own resources, all generally goes right. To those who never heard him in an exuberant mood the following sample of his manner may convey a notion of it:

"Some one mentioned that a young Scotchman, who had been lately in the neighbourhood, was about to marry an Irish widow, double his age and of considerable dimensions. 'Going to marry her!' he exclaimed, bursting out laughing; 'going to marry her! impossible! you mean, a part of her: he could not marry her all himself. It would be a case, not of bigamy, but trigamy; the neighbourhood or the magistrates should interfere. There is enough of her to furnish wives for a whole parish. One man marry her!—it is monstrous. You might people a colony with her; or give an assembly with her; or perhaps take your morning's walk round her, always provided there were frequent resting-places, and you were in rude health. I once was rash enough to try walking round her before breakfast, but only got half-way and gave it up exhausted. Or you might read the Riot Act and disperse her; in short, you might do anything with her but marry her.' 'Oh, Mr. Sydney!' said a young lady recovering from the general laugh, did you make all that yourself?' 'Yes, Lucy,'—throwing himself back in his chair and shaking with laughter; 'all myself, child; all my own thunder. Do you think, when I am about to make a joke, I send for my neighbours C. and G., or consult the clerk and churchwardens upon it? But let us go into the garden.' And, all laughing till we cried, without hats or bonnets, we sallied forth out of his glorified window into the garden."—vol. i. pp. 344-5.

The story of his furnishing his house with pictures is correct in the main; but the biographer has forgotten to state that he gravely consulted two Royal

Academicians, and when they had been some time considering what sales were likely to take place, he added, by way of after-thought, "Oh, I ought to have told you that my outside price for a picture is thirty-five shillings." The reminiscent has omitted the best part of the remark on the late Lord Denman, which was, that it was a wonder his court was not constantly beset with sculptors and artists engaged in studying and copying so fine a model.

Several of his jokes or oddities (as the invention of the patent armour against bodily ailments, and the tying oranges on the bay trees on the lawn) are told twice over with variations; and many of the pointed remarks, reported as conversational, will be found much better expressed in his printed letters or publications. He is made to say of one of his neighbours: "I believe ——would die for his game. He is truly a pheasant-minded man: he revenged himself upon me by telling all the Joseph Millers he could find as my jokes." This gentleman has certainly found effective cooperation where he had least reason to hope for it, namely, amongst the friends and admirers of his victim. Some of the most enthusiastic of these, with all their cultivation and accomplishment, were notoriously endowed with the faintest possible perception of humour, and were really attracted to him by his understanding and his cheerfulness.

The Americans were very angry at his Repudiation Letters, and their Press accused him in the coarsest language of being exclusively actuated by interested motives. This was a mistake. His loss did not exceed 50*l.*, and the line he took may be sufficiently accounted for by his instinctive hatred of dishonesty, and his fears lest free institutions should be discredited. There was more sorrow than anger in his concluding remark, "And now having eased my soul of its indignation, and sold my stock at 40 per cent

discount, I sulkily retire from the subject, with a fixed intention of lending no more money to free and enlightened republics; but of employing my money henceforth in buying up Abyssinian bonds, and purchasing into the Turkish Fours, or the Tunis Three-and-a-half per Cent Funds."

He was fond of the society of cultivated Americans, although he was wont to complain of their slow perception of humour, and their touchiness when they suspected the laugh to be at their expense. Once, when a former representative of the United States flared up at an unlucky doubt expressed whether canvas-back ducks were not a "humbug," Sydney turned round to the sceptical gourmand and exclaimed, "Now, you are in for it. You had better have trampled upon their flag." It was upon this occasion he said: "I had intended going to America; but my parishioners held a meeting, and came to a resolution that they could not trust me with the canvas-back ducks; and I felt they were right, so gave up the project." He would relate with great glee how a celebrated Yankee critic claimed fellowship with him as one of the craft, and gravely asked his opinion whether he did not think pepper and vinegar the essential ingredients of a review. His first reflection after his introduction to Webster (whose eminent qualities are acknowledged in the correspondence) was that time could not be valuable in America.

On receiving some American papers taking his side of the Repudiation question, he wrote:

"Bowood, Jan. 8, 1844.

"Dear Hayward,—Many thanks for your good-nature. From the opposite principle, the —— has sent me all the American abuse. They call me a minor canon eighty-five years of age, an ass, and a Xantippe, mistaking evidently the sex of that termagant person. The truth is that neither Macaulay nor Croker are like the Falls of Niagara. Macaulay

is always rising instead of falling, and Croker has ceased to fall, because he can fall no lower than he has done already. We have had a very agreeable party here. I return on Tuesday. "Ever truly yours,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

He often alluded with evident complacency to the spread of his fame on the other side of the Atlantic, as when he says, "I have heard that one of the American Ministers in this country was so oppressed by the numbers of his countrymen applying for introductions, that he was obliged at last to set up sham Sydney Smiths and false Macaulays. But they can't have been good counterfeits; for a most respectable American, on his return home, was heard describing Sydney Smith as a thin, grave, dull old fellow; and as to Macaulay (said he) I never met a more silent man in my life." Sophie Arnault actually played off a similar trick on a party of Parisian fine ladies and gentlemen who had expressed a wish to meet Rousseau. She dressed up a theatrical tailor who bore some likeness to the author of "Emile," and placed him next to herself at dinner, with instructions not to open his mouth except to eat and drink. Unluckily he opened it too often for the admission of champagne, and began talking in a style befitting the *coulisses;* but this only added to the delusion, and the next day the noble faubourg rang with praises of the easy sparkling pleasantry of the philosopher. According to another well-authenticated anecdote, there was a crazy fellow at Edinburgh, who called himself Doctor, fancied that he had once been on the point of obtaining the chair of Moral Philosophy, and professed the most extravagant admiration for a celebrated poet. Some wag suggested that he should pay a visit to his idol. He did so, and stayed two days, indulging his monomania, but simultaneously gratifying his host's prodigious appetite for adulation;

and the poet uniformly spoke of him as one of the most intelligent and well-informed Scotchmen he had ever known. When this story was told to Sydney Smith, he offered the narrator five shillings for the exclusive right to it for a week. The bargain was struck, and the money paid down.

With all his boundless fertility of fancy, he delighted in a good story, and fully exemplified his own remarks in the lecture on Wit and Humour. "If I say a good thing to-day, and repeat it again to-morrow in another company, the flash of to-day is as much like the flash of to-morrow, as the flash of one musket is like the flash of another: but if I tell a humorous story, there are a thousand little diversities in my voice, manner, language, and gestures, which render it rather a different thing from what it was before, and infuse a tinge of novelty into the repeated narrative." A story that seemed to haunt him for weeks, was one of a tame magpye in a church, that suddenly descended on the reading-desk and endeavoured to fly off with the sermon; and of the desperate struggle that ensued between the bird and the preacher, "the congregation all in favour of the pye."

There was another which he seldom failed to repeat whenever one of his most agreeable neighbours, whose Christian name was Ambrose, was announced. "Do you know how they pronounce Ambrose in Yorkshire? They turn it into Amorous. Once at Foston, I was told that Amorous Phillips was waiting to speak to me in the hall. 'Let him wait,' said I, —deceived by this manner of pronunciation, which I heard for the first time,—'but do not let any of the maid-servants go near him.'"

Many discriminating tributes to Sydney Smith's worth and talents are included in this biography, but Mrs. Austin's preface to the second volume renders all the rest superfluous. It is a concise, convincing,

impartial, and affectionate summary of her lamented friend's leading merits and distinguishing qualities. It hardly requires an addition, and certainly does not admit of improvement. After justly remarking that, many of the giants he combated being not only slain but forgotten, the very completeness of his victory tends to efface from the minds of the present generation the extent of their obligations to him, she asks, "What other private gentleman of our day, unconnected with Parliament, without rank or fortune, has been able by a few pages from his pen to electrify the country, as he did by his letters to the Americans? or to fight single-handed against the combined power of the ministry and of the dignitaries of the Church —a battle in which he carried public opinion with him?"—or, we beg leave to add, to alter the whole complexion of a controversy on a subject apparently so exhausted as the Ballot? At the same time, we cannot quite agree with Mrs. Austin as to his style; and Sir Henry Holland's remarks, which she quotes approvingly, must be read with a few grains of allowance:—"If," writes Sir Henry, "Mr. Sydney Smith had not been the greatest and most brilliant of wits, he would have been the most remarkable man of his time for a sound and vigorous understanding and great reasoning powers; and if he had not been distinguished for these, he would have been the most eminent and the purest writer of English."

Since we are on the chapter of style, we may be pardoned for suggesting that Sir Henry's obvious meaning is not expressed with his usual precision. But he clearly intended to assert that Sydney Smith, besides being the most brilliant of wits, and possessing great reasoning powers, was no less remarkable for the excellence of his style. Now a good style is one which can be safely recommended for general

use; and in saying that Sydney Smith's was not, in this sense at least, a good style, we say no more than is indisputably true of Burke's, Gibbon's, or Johnson's. We are not denying that Sydney Smith's style was admirably fitted for his purpose, and we could cite passages of high eloquence which are unexceptionable in point of composition. His sermons, which are mostly free from mannerism, prove that he could combine purity and correctness with force of language when he thought fit. But his humorous writings are often deficient in ease, smoothness, grace, rhythm, and purity, because he constantly aimed at effect by startling contrasts, by the juxtaposition of incongruous images or epithets, or by the use of odd-sounding words and strange compounds of Greek and Latin derivation. Thus he describes a preacher wiping his face with his "cambric *sudarium*," and asks, "Why this *holoplexia* on sacred occasions alone?" A weak and foolish man is "anserous and asinine." Dr. Parr's wig is the *μέγα θαῦμα* of barbers. Mr. Grote is quizzed for supposing that England is to be governed by "political acupuncturation," and told that his concealed democrat, doomed to lead a long life of lies between every election, "must do this not only *eundo*, in his calm and prudential state, but *redeundo*, from the market, warmed with beer and expanded by alcohol."

This is certainly not pure English; it is not even popular writing, like Defoe's, or Swift's, or Cobbett's. It is *caviare* to the multitude, and would require to be interpreted for the benefit of the ladies and the country gentlemen; that is, if the country gentlemen did not now constitute one of the most highly educated classes of our society. The art of true criticism demands that we should subject ourselves to a strict self-examination, and that we should analyse the causes and sources of our impressions, favourable or

unfavourable. Let Sir Henry Holland do this, and he will admit that he has confounded the style with the man, and that Sydney Smith sometimes formed a striking exception to Buffon's famous dogma, *Le style, c'est l'homme.* In this case the man was always natural, simple, and essentially English, — the style was often forced, factitious, composite, and (to borrow his own word) cosmopolite. Many of his allusive expressions, rich with the raciest humour, could not be enjoyed beyond the polished circles of the metropolis. He wrote for the meridian of Holland House; and one reason why he notwithstanding exercised such widespread influence, is to be found in the aristocratic constitution of our Legislature.

What Sir Henry Holland says of the suddenness and unexpectedness of his manner is just. His review of Madame d'Epinay's "Memoirs" begins thus:

"There used to be in Paris, under the ancient *régime*, a few women of brilliant talents, who violated all the common duties of life, and gave very pleasant little suppers. Among these supped and sinned Madame d'Epinay, the friend and companion of Rousseau, Diderot, Grimm, Holbach, and many other literary persons of distinction of that period. Her principal lover was Grimm; with whom was deposited, written in feigned names, the history of her life. Grimm died — his secretary sold the history — the feigned names have been exchanged for the real ones — and her works now appear abridged in three volumes octavo."

An excellent judge of composition, the Dean of St. Paul's (Dr. Milman), has spoken of the increased vigour of style and boldness of illustration in Sydney Smith's writings as he advanced in years. This is most observable in the letters, the earliest of which, we frankly own, have disappointed us, although they contain ample confirmation (were any needed) of his soundness of principle, his unaffected piety, his unde-

viating rectitude of purpose, his affectionate disposition, his happy temper, and his warm heart. The shortest are the best. The longest, we believe, cost him no effort; but some of them read as if they did, and we would gladly exchange them for a collection of the notes he dashed off in the daily commerce of life. Thus in one excusing himself from keeping an engagement to sup in the Temple:

"Charles Street, May 18, 1836.

"My dear Hayward,—There is no more harm in talking between eleven and one, than between nine and eleven. The Temple is as good as Charles Street. The ladies are the most impregnable, and the gentlemen the most unimpeachable, of the sex; but still I have a feeling of the wickedness of supping in the Temple; my delicate and irritable virtue is alarmed, and I recede.

"Ever yours, S. S."

The following, printed in the selection, are thoroughly characteristic:

"Munden House, Friday 11, 1841.

"Dear Milnes, — I will not receive you on these terms, but postpone you for safer times. I cannot blame you; but, seriously, dinners are destroyed by the inconveniences of a free Government. I have filled up your place, and bought your book.

"SYDNEY SMITH."

"May 14, 1842.

"My dear Dickens, — I accept your obliging invitation conditionally. If I am invited by any man of greater genius than yourself, or one by whose works I have been more completely interested, I will repudiate you, and dine with the more splendid phenomenon of the two.

"Ever yours sincerely,
"SYDNEY SMITH."

"July 4, 1843.

"My dear Lord Mahon, — I am only half-recovered from a violent attack of gout in the knee, and I could not bear the confinement of dinner, without getting up and walking be-

tween the courses, or thrusting my foot on somebody else's chair, like the Archbishop of Dublin. For these reasons, I have been forced for some time, and am still forced, to decline dinner engagements. I should, in a sounder state, have had great pleasure in accepting the very agreeable party you are kind enough to propose to me; but I shall avail myself, in the next campaign, of your kindness. I consider myself as well acquainted with Lady Mahon and yourself, and shall hope to see you here, as well as elsewhere. Pray present my benediction to your charming wife, who I am sure would bring any plant in the garden into full flower by looking at it, and smiling upon it. Try the experiment from mere curiosity.

"Ever yours, SYDNEY SMITH."

The following is a sample of his more thoughtful epistles. It is addressed to his old friend Lord Murray:

"Green Street, June 4, 1843.

"My dear Murray,—I should be glad to hear something of your life and adventures, and more particularly so, as I learn you have no intention of leaving Edinburgh for London this season.

"Mrs. Sydney and I have been remarkably well, and are so at present; why, I cannot tell. I am getting very old in years, but do not feel that I have become so in constitution. My locomotive powers at seventy-three are abridged, but my animal spirits do not desert me. I am become rich. My youngest brother died suddenly, leaving behind him 100,000*l.* and no will. A third of this therefore fell to my share, and puts me at my ease for my few remaining years. After buying into the Consols and the Reduced, I read Seneca 'On the Contempt of Wealth!' What intolerable nonsense! I heard your *éloge* from Lord Lansdowne when I dined with him, and I need not say how heartily I concurred in it. Next to me sat Lord Worsley, whose enclosed letter affected me, and very much pleased me. I answered it with sincere warmth. Pray return me the paper. Did you read my American Petition, and did you approve it?

. . . . . .

"Why don't they talk over the virtues and excellences of

Lansdowne? There is no man who performs the duties of life better, or fills a higher station in a more becoming manner. He is full of knowledge, and eager for its acquisition. His remarkable politeness is the result of good nature, regulated by good sense. He looks for talents and qualities among all ranks of men, and adds them to his stock of society, as a botanist does his plants; and while other aristocrats are yawning among Stars and Garters, Lansdowne is refreshing his soul with the fancy and genius which he has found in odd places, and gathered to the marbles and pictures of his palace. Then he is an honest politician, a wise statesman, and has a philosophic mind; he is very agreeable in conversation, and is a man of an unblemished life. I shall take care of him in my Memoirs!

"Remember me very kindly to the *maximus minimus* (Lord Jeffrey), and to the Scotch Church. I have urged my friend the Bishop of Durham to prepare kettles of soup for the seceders, who will probably be wandering in troops over our Northern Counties.

"Ever your sincere friend,
"SYDNEY SMITH."

Without carrying the taste so far as Tieck, whose Shakspeare readings and *soirées* at Dresden boasted about four women to one man, Sydney Smith had a marked predilection for female society. The letters selected for publication were principally addressed to ladies; the Countess Grey, the late Lady Holland, Mrs. Meynell of Temple Newsham, Mrs. Grote, and Miss Georgiana Harcourt (now Mrs. Malcolm), being amongst the most favoured of his fair correspondents. The letters which passed between him and the Dowager Countess of Morley are capital. She had more of his peculiar humour, buoyancy of spirit, fertile fancy, and unaffected cordiality than any other of his contemporaries, male or female; and the charm of her merriment was ineffably enhanced by feminine refinement and grace. Her death is the greatest loss sustained by English Society since it lost him. In the following playful competition of wit, their simi-

larity and their congeniality in their sportive moods are obvious:

[No date.]

"Dear Lady Morley, — Pray understand me rightly: I do not give the Bluecoat theory as an established fact, but as a highly probable conjecture; look at the circumstances. At a very early age young Quakers disappear; at a very early age the Coat-boys are seen; at the age of seventeen or eighteen young Quakers are again seen; at the same age the Coat-boys disappear: who has ever heard of a Coat-man? The thing is utterly unknown in natural history. Upon what other evidence does the migration of the grub into the aurelia rest? After a certain number of days the grub is no more seen, and the aurelia flutters over his relics. That such a prominent fact should have escaped our naturalists is truly astonishing; I had long suspected it, but was afraid to come out with a speculation so bold, and now mention it as protected and sanctioned by you.

"Dissection would throw great light upon the question; and if our friend —— would receive two boys into his house about the time of their changing their coats, great service would be rendered to the cause.

"Our friend Lord Grey, not remarkable for his attention to natural history, was a good deal struck with the novelty and ingenuity of the hypothesis. I have ascertained that the young Bluecoat infants are fed with drab-coloured pap, which looks very suspicious. More hereafter on this interesting subject. Where real science is to be promoted, I will make no apology to your Ladyship for this intrusion.

"Yours truly,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

[No date.]

"Had I received your letter," she replies, "two days since, I should have said your arguments and theory were perfectly convincing, and that the most obstinate sceptic must have yielded to them; but I have come across a person in that interval who gives me information which puts us all at sea again. That the Bluecoat boy should be the larva of the Quaker in Great Britain is possible, and even probable, but we must take a wider view of the question; and here, I confess, I am bewildered by doubts and difficulties. The

Bluecoat is an indigenous animal — not so the Quaker; and now be so good as to give your whole mind to the facts I have to communicate. I have seen and talked much with Sir R. Kerr Porter on this interesting subject. He has travelled over the whole habitable globe, and has penetrated with a scientific and scrutinising eye into regions hitherto unexplored by civilised man; and yet *he* has never seen a Quaker baby. He has lived for years in Philadelphia (the national nest of Quakers); he has roamed up and down Broadways and lengthways in every nook and corner of Pennsylvania; and yet he never saw a Quaker baby; and what is new and most striking, never did he see a Quaker lady in a situation which gave hope that a Quaker baby might be seen hereafter. This is a stunning fact, and involving the question in such impenetrable mystery as will, I fear, defy even your sagacity, acuteness, and industry to elucidate. But let us not be checked and cast down; truth is the end and object of our research. Let us not bate one jot of heart and hope, but still bear up, and steer our course right onward.

"Yours most truly,

"F. MORLEY."

It would be difficult to find a more pleasing specimen of his letters to ladies than the following to Lady Dufferin: —

"Combe Florey [no date].

"I am just beginning to get well from that fit of gout, at the beginning of which you were charitable enough to pay me a visit, and I said — the same Providence which inflicts gout, creates Dufferins! We must take the good and the evils of life.

"I am charmed, I confess, with the beauty of this country. I hope some day you will be charmed with it too. It banished, however, every Arcadian notion to see —— walk in at the gate to-day. I seemed to be transported instantly to Piccadilly, and the innocence went out of me.

"I hope the process of furnishing goes on well. Attend, I pray you, to the proper selection of an easy chair, where you may cast yourself down in the weariness and distresses of life, with the absolute certainty that every joint of the human frame will receive all the comfort which can be derived from easy position and soft materials; then the glass,

on which your eyes are so often fixed, knowing that you have the great duty imposed on the Sheridans, of looking well. You may depend upon it, happiness depends mainly on these little things.

"I hope you remain in perfect favour with Rogers, and that you are not omitted in any of the dress breakfast parties. Remember me to the Norton: tell her I am glad to be sheltered from her beauty by the insensibility of age; that I shall not live to see its decay, but die with that unfaded image before my eyes: but don't make a mistake, and deliver the message to —— instead of your sister.

"I remain, dear Lady Dufferin, very sincerely yours,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

We had thoughts of attempting, with the aid of Mr. Thackeray's Lectures, to draw a parallel between Sydney Smith and the other leading English humourists; but comparisons are proverbially odious, and in a case like the present they would be both unjust and inconclusive. Sydney Smith stands alone: none but himself can be his parallel; and he is the first in his line, although his line may not be the first. He possessed the faculty of simplifying and popularising reason and argument in a way which must be pronounced inimitable, and during forty years he uniformly exerted it for noble and useful ends. He weeded out a mass of noxious errors, and he placed a number of valuable truths and principles in new and striking points of view, thereby adding incalculably to their exchangeable value and beneficial influence. The good he has done in this way cannot be measured by what passes current, or is ticketed, as his; for so fertile was his mind that thoughts and images fell from him and were picked up and appropriated by others, like the carelessly set jewels which dropped from Buckingham's dress at the Court of Anne of Austria. He never came into society without naturally and easily taking the lead as, beyond all question, the most

agreeable, sensible, and instructive guest and companion that the oldest person living could remember. These are his titles to the celebrity which still attaches to his name, but unluckily they sound transitory, perishable, and inappreciable when contrasted with the claims of the first-class humourists to the undisturbed enjoyment of their immortality. Each of these has produced at least one standard work, which will rank as an English classic so long as the English language endures. Sydney Smith is similarly situated in this respect to what Swift would be if he had never written "The Tale of a Tub" or "Gulliver's Travels." But if the Canon of St. Paul's was inferior to the Dean of St. Patrick's as a writer, he was superior as a moralist and a man. The prime of his life was not wasted in the barren and abortive struggles of faction. His temper was not soured by disappointment, nor his heart corroded by misanthropy. He was not like the scathed elm which had begun to wither at the top. His intellect retained to the last its original brightness; and he died in the fulness of years, with glowing affections and unimpaired faculties, surrounded by all that should accompany old age, and able to say with Addison to any sorrowing relative who may have needed the lesson, "I have sent for you that you may see how a Christian can die."

We may apply to him, with the alteration of a word or two, what he said in his letter to Sir James Mackintosh's son:—"The impression which the great talents and amiable qualities of your father made upon me will remain as long as I remain. When I turn from living spectacles of stupidity, ignorance, and malice, and wish to think better of the world, I remember my great and benevolent friend Mackintosh." How often, in an analogous mood of mind, have we not thus thought of *him!* How ardently,

when we see folly or bigotry reviving and putting forth fresh offshoots, do we long for one of his racy pamphlets or pithy letters! Oh, for one hour of Peter Plymley! What a subject for his pen would be the intolerance of the Sabbatarian party, the call for new bishops as the one thing needful in India, the cry for the simultaneous conversion and extermination of the Hindoo race, or the new-fangled commercial system in which accommodation bills and paper money were to perform all the functions of capital. When we turn from such spectacles, and wish to think better of the world, we remember our great, wise, and benevolent friend, Sydney Smith.

SAMUEL ROGERS.

(From the Edinburgh Review, July, 1856.)

Recollections of the Table Talk of Samuel Rogers; *to which is added Porsoniana.* London: 1856.

For more than half a century a small house in a quiet nook of London has been the recognised abode of taste, and the envied resort of wit, beauty, learning, and genius. There, surrounded by the choicest treasures of art, and in a light reflected from Guidos and Titians, have sat and mingled in familiar converse the most eminent poets, painters, actors, artists, critics, travellers, historians, warriors, orators, and statesmen of two generations. Under that roof celebrities of all sorts, matured or budding, and however contrasted in genius or pursuit, met as on the table land where (according to D'Alembert) Archimedes and Homer may stand on a perfect footing of equality. The man of mind was introduced to the man of action, and modest merit which had yet its laurels to win, was first brought acquainted with the patron who was to push its fortunes, or with the hero whose name sounded like a trumpet tone. It was in that dining-room that Erskine told the story of his first brief, and Grattan that of his last duel: that the "Iron Duke" described Waterloo as a "battle of giants:" that Chantrey, placing his hand on a mahogany pedestal, said, "Mr. Rogers, do you remember a workman at five shillings a day who came in at that door to receive your orders for this work? I was that workman." It was there, too, that Byron's intimacy with Moore commenced over the famous mess of potatoes and vinegar: that

Madame de Staël, after a triumphant argument with Mackintosh, was (as recorded by Byron) "well ironed" by Sheridan: that Sydney Smith, at dinner with Walter Scott, Campbell, Moore, Wordsworth and Washington Irving, declared that he and Irving, if the only prose-writers, were not the only prosers in the company.

It was through that window, opening to the floor and leading through the garden to the Park, that the host started with Sheridan's gifted grand-daughter on "The Winter's Walk" which she has so gracefully and feelingly commemorated. It was in the library above, that Wordsworth, holding up the original contract for the copyright of "Paradise Lost" (1600 copies for 5*l.*), proved to his own entire satisfaction that solid fame was in an inverse ratio to popularity; whilst Coleridge, with his finger upon the parchment deed by which Dryden agreed for the translation of the Æneid, expatiated on the advantages which would have accrued to literature, if "glorious John" had selected the Iliad and left Virgil to Pope. Whilst these and similar scenes are passing, we can fancy the host murmuring his well-known lines:

> "Be mine to listen; pleased but not elate,
> Ever too modest or too proud to rate
> Myself by my companions, self-compell'd
> To earn the station that in life I held."

This house, rich as it was in varied associations, was only completed in 1801 or 1802; but the late owner's intimacy with men and women of note goes back to a long antecedent period. He had been, some years before, proposed at Johnson's club—*the* club, as it is denominated still—by Fox, seconded by Windham, and (as he fully believed) black-balled by Malone. He had met Condorcet at Lafayette's table in 1789. In the course of a single Sunday at Edinburgh in the same eventful year, he had breakfasted with

Robertson, heard *him* preach in the forenoon and Blair in the afternoon, drank tea with the Piozzis, and supped with Adam Smith.

There is surely something more in this position, than the extraordinary prolongation of human life, or than its utility as a connecting link between two or three generations, the point of view in which hitherto it has been almost exclusively considered. It leads naturally and necessarily to reflections on the state of our society, especially in relation to the literary, artistic, and intellectual elements, during the last seventy years; and we feel eager to profit by the experience and sagacity of a nonogenarian who had enjoyed such ample opportunities for appreciating mankind. Fortunately Mr. Rogers's mental habits and tendencies strongly disposed and qualified him for turning his length of years to good account. His writings teem with maxims of worldly wisdom, enforced or illustrated by remarkable incidents, and his conversation was replete with anecdotes selected for the sake of the light they threw on manners, the trains of thought they suggested, or the moral they involved. What has been printed of his "table talk" is very far from being in keeping with his character, or on a par with his fame. Indeed, those who form their opinion from such records as the volume before us may be excused for attributing the assiduous court paid him to the caprice of fashion; whilst others, with better materials for judgment, will haply account for the phenomenon by the felicitous combination of long life, ample means, cultivated taste, refined hospitality, and poetic celebrity in one man. Whichever party, the detractors or the admirers, may turn out right, the critical analysis of his life and writings which must precede any honest attempt to adjudicate upon his reputation, cannot fail to be highly instructive; nor will it be found wanting in the leading

attractions of literary biography. We, therefore, propose to review the principal incidents and performances of a life extending over ninety-two of the most exciting and eventful years of the world's history.

Samuel Rogers was born at Newington Green, on the 30th July, 1763. He was one of a family of six children, three sons and three daughters; he was the third son. The father was an opulent banker, head of the firm of Rogers, Olding, and Co., in Freeman's Court, Cornhill. In 1811 the business was transferred to 29, Clement's Lane, Lombard Street, where it is now carried on (1856), under the name of Olding, Sharpe, and Co. Prior to his marriage, he was a member of the Church of England; but the influence of his wife speedily effected his conversion to her own creed, the Unitarian; and by the time Samuel was old enough to understand or be moved by such things, the whole family were in regular attendance on the ministry of the celebrated Dr. Price, the adversary of Burke. The relative importance of the principal dissenting bodies has undergone so sensible a diminution of late years, that it may be difficult for the present generation to form a just estimate of the eminence and influence of the nonconformist community in question. Yet its annals are rich in literary illustration. The names of Defoe, Dr. Watts, Dr. Price, Dr. Rees, Mrs. Barbauld, and Dr. Aikin, with others by no means undistinguished, are indelibly associated with the congregation of Newington Green; which still flourishes under the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Cromwell (of the Protector's family), and still comprises most of the primitive and highly respectable connexions of the banker-poet. He was undeniably indebted to his Dissenting friends for his first introduction to celebrated people in England, Scotland, and France; nor was the tie

which bound him to them altogether dissolved by his excursions into the regions of orthodoxy and fashion. He was a trustee of the Newington Presbyterian Meeting House from 1790 to his death—a period of sixty-five years; and when the Dissenters' Chapel Bill was before Parliament, he signed a petition in favour of it in that capacity.

According to his own account, Samuel Rogers had every reason to congratulate himself on his parentage, paternal and maternal. His mother, of whom he uniformly spoke as an amiable and very handsome woman, sedulously inculcated kindness and gentleness; whilst his father, who lived till 1793, gave him a good education suited to his intended mode of life, put him in the way of making a fortune, and carefully refrained from thwarting him in his inclinations or pursuits, although these must frequently have jarred against the nonconformist citizen's notion of the fitness of things. On seeing his son taking to poetry and fine company, the old man must have felt like the hen who sees the duckling, which she has hatched as a bird of her own feather, suddenly taking to water; and in his heart he probably agreed with Lord Ellenborough, who on hearing that a new poem ("The Pleasures of Memory") had just been published by a young banker, exclaimed "If old Gozzy"—alluding to the head of the firm with which he banked—"ever so much as says a good thing,—let alone writing,—I will close my account with him the next morning."

In early boyhood, the future poet's impulse was to start off the course in a diametrically opposite direction. When he and his brothers were called in and asked by the father what professions they wished to follow, Samuel avowed his predilection for that of a preacher; a choice which he explained by his admiration for Dr. Price. "He was our neighbour of

Newington Green, and would often drop in to spend the evening with us, in his dressing-gown: he would talk and read the Bible to us till he sent us to bed in a frame of mind as heavenly as his own. He lived much in the society of Lord Lansdowne and other people of rank, and his manners were extremely polished." If the child be father to the man, we must be pardoned for suspecting that the mundane advantages of the divine had at least as much to do with the influence which he exercised over his young admirer, as the truths divine that came mended from his tongue.

The chief part, if not the whole, of Rogers's formal and regular education was received at a Dissenting school at Hackney, where he learnt Latin enough to enable him to read the easier Latin classics with facility. By the time he quitted it, he had got rid of his pulpit aspirations, and he is not recorded to have manifested any marked reluctance to his destination when he was placed in the paternal counting-house, with the view of being in due course admitted a member of the firm. He began the serious business of life with the good sense and prudence which never left him; although he was constantly exposed to temptations to which most men of poetical or susceptible temperament would have succumbed. When his solid comforts and his well understood interests were involved, the Dalilahs of fame and fashion, of vanity and sensibility, exhausted their arts on him in vain. He kept his gaze steadily fixed on the main chance. Even when he set up as a poet, he could honestly say, "I left no calling for this idle trade—no duty broke;" and he continued laying the foundations of his ideal edifice of social enjoyment and prosperity, with a patience and precision worthy of the most painstaking and methodical of economists and calculators.

It was his favourite speculation, that the greatest

command of worldly happiness was attainable by one who, beginning low on the social ladder, should mount gradually and regularly to the top. It has been invidiously objected that this sounds very like the career of a successful tuft-hunter. But Rogers insisted that every step in the ascent should be won honourably, and that the sustained gratification was to arise from recognised merit, and would be poisoned by the smallest admixture of conscious unworthiness. Fortunately, he has himself explained and amplified his theory, in one of the most striking passages of his "Italy": —

> "All, wherever in the scale,
> Have—be they high or low, or rich or poor,
> Inherit they a sheep-hook or a sceptre—
> Much to be grateful for; but most has he,
> Born in that middle sphere, that temperate zone,
> Where Knowledge lights his lamp. . . .
> What men most covet,—wealth, distinction, power,
> Are baubles nothing worth, that only serve
> To rouse us up, as children in the schools
> Are roused up to exertion. *The reward*
> *Is in the race we run, not in the prize;*
> And they, the few, that have it ere they earn it,
> Having, by favour or inheritance,
> These dangerous gifts placed in their idle hands,
> And all that should await on worth well-tried,
> All in the glorious days of old reserved
> For manhood most mature or reverend age,
> Know not, nor ever can, the generous pride
> That glows in him who on himself relies,
> Entering the lists of life."

Thirsting for distinction, he hurried into the lists without adequate preparation, and with ill-fitting and borrowed arms. Most young aspirants to distinction instinctively copy the model that caprice or accident has made popular; and indiscriminately adopt, to the best of their ability, the vice or virtue, the folly or wisdom, the style of dress or the style of writing, that is in vogue. When Rogers started as an author, he was not exempt from this almost universal weak-

ness; and to explain his poetical development, we must cast a retrospective glance over the poetical productions and literary tendencies of the generation in which he was trained up.

The period in question was the Augustan age of historians and novelists; for within it flourished, in fulness of reputation, Hume, Robertson, Gibbon, Fielding, Smollett, Richardson, and Goldsmith. The rich mine opened by the essayists, beginning with the "Tatler" and the "Spectator," had been worked out, and was virtually abandoned after the termination of the "Idler" in 1757; whilst a cold shade was flung over poetry by the name and memory of Pope. No school has practically proved more depressing to originality than his,—despite (perhaps by reason) of his own exquisite fancy, and notwithstanding the encouragement to erratic courses held out in the familiar couplet—

> "From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
> And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art."

Nor have many schools retained their influence longer; for Crabbe was wittily described as "Pope in worsted stockings;" and the spell was not completely broken until the 19th century, when Sir Walter Scott inspired the taste for metrical tales of passion and adventure.* Collins and Gray, emboldened by "Alexander's Feast" and the "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day," produced some fine lyrical pieces, as the "Ode to the Passions" and "The Bard;" but for more than fifty years after the death of the bard of Twickenham, English poetry ran almost exclusively in the didactic, descriptive, or elegiac line, with an occasional digression into satire. Rogers's avowed

* Coleridge's admirers were wont to maintain that Scott owed more than he cared to own to "*Christabel;*" but, by a parity of reasoning, Coleridge may be accused of owing more than he cared to own to "*Faust.*"

favourites were Gray and Goldsmith; and his preference has been justified by posterity. "I used," he said, "to take a pocket edition of Gray's Poems with me every morning during my walks to my father's banking-house, where I was a clerk, and read them by the way. I can repeat them all." On another occasion he exclaimed, "What pleasure I felt on being told that Este (Parson Este) had said of me, 'A child of Goldsmith, sir.'" This must have been after the publication of the "Pleasures of Memory:" for Rogers, having first tried his strength in prose, began his poetical career by taking for his prototype the one (Gray) of his two favourites whose genius was least in harmony with his own, and by imbuing himself with the spirit of what must have been to him the least congenial of that one's productions.

The to all agreeable, to many intoxicating, sensation of first seeing oneself in print, was experienced by Rogers in 1781, when he contributed eight essays, under the title of *The Scribbler*, to "The Gentleman's Magazine,"—the same which, under the editorship of Sylvanus Urban (Cave) had been the repository of the earliest efforts of Johnson in the same walk. "He told me," says Boswell, "that when he first saw St. John's Gate, the place where that deservedly popular miscellany was originally printed, he beheld it with reverence." Probably it was Johnsonian influence that gave their peculiar form to Rogers's first attempts at authorship; for the great lexicographer was amongst the idols of his youth. "My friend Maltby and I," he used to relate, "had a strong desire to see Dr. Johnson; and we determined to call upon him and introduce ourselves. We accordingly proceeded to his house in Bolt Court; and I had my hand on the knocker, when our courage failed us, and we retreated. Many years afterwards I mentioned this circumstance to

Boswell, who said, 'What a pity you did not go boldly in! he would have received you with all kindness.'"

Rogers commonly followed up this anecdote with another of the advice he gave, instead of a letter of introduction, to a young friend who was going to Birmingham, and had a similar desire to see Dr. Parr. The advice was to be collected from the result. "Well, what did you do?" was my first question to the traveller on his return. "Exactly as you told me. I knocked boldly at the door, and asked for Dr. Parr. I was shown into a parlour on the ground floor by a servant-maid. When the Doctor appeared, I looked steadily at him for a moment, and then said, 'Dr. Parr, I have taken an inexcusable liberty, and I cannot complain if you order me to be kicked out of your house. On seeing your name upon the door, I could not make up my mind to pass the house of the greatest man in Europe without seeing him. I knocked, was admitted, and here I am!' The Doctor seized me by both hands in a kind of transport of welcome, fairly danced me up and down the room, and ended by keeping me to dinner on a roast shoulder of mutton."

Rogers's admiration of Johnson never extended to his style, and the most remarkable features of "The Scribbler" are the correctness and ease of the language. All the essays are commonplace enough in point of thought and conception, nor would it be difficult to specify the very "Ramblers" or "Idlers" which the writer had in his mind's eye whilst composing them; but the one on "Fashion" is written with a freedom and rhythmical flow which are rarely found in essayists of eighteen:—

"Whether she (Fashion) heightened with a pencil the vermilion of her cheek, or clothed her limbs with a tight or

flowing vest; whether she collected her ringlets in a knot, or suffered them to hang negligently on her shoulders; whether she shook the dice, waked the lyre, or filled the sparkling glass,— she was imitated by her votaries, who vied with each other in obsequiousness and reverence. All insisted on presenting their offerings; either their health, their fortunes, or their integrity. Though numbers incessantly disappeared, the assembly, receiving continual supplies, preserved its grandeur and its brilliancy. At the entrance I observed Vanity, fantastically crowned with flowers and feathers, to whom the fickle deity committed the initiation of her votaries. These having fluttered as gaily as their predecessors, in a few moments vanished, and were succeeded by others. All who rejected the solicitations of Vanity, were compelled to enter by Ridicule, whose shafts were universally dreaded. Even Literature, Science, and Philosophy were obliged to comply. Those only escaped who were concealed beneath the veil of Obscurity. As I gazed on this glittering scene, having declined the invitation of Vanity, Ridicule shot an arrow from her bow, which pierced my heart: I fainted, and in the violence of my agitation awaked."

To judge from the small type in which they were printed, and the places assigned to them in the columns of Mr. Sylvanus Urban, that practised judge of literary merit attached no great value to the lucubrations of "The Scribbler," and they were discontinued after September 1781. The author of the "Table Talk" states that he was present when Mr. Rogers tore to pieces, and threw into the fire, a manuscript operatic drama, the "Vintage of Burgundy," which he had written early in life. "He told me he offered it to a manager, who said, 'I will bring it on the stage if you are determined to have it acted, but it will certainly be damned.'" Unless this drama was composed wholly or in part between 1781 and 1786, we must conclude that this interval was employed in preparing for his first public appearance as a poet, which was not unlikely, considering

the amount of labour that he was wont to devote to his compositions. The "Ode to Superstition, with some other Poems," was published in 1786. It was an eighteenpenny quarto of twenty-six pages, after the fashion of the times, when the eye was relieved by "rivulets of text running through meadows of margin." He is reported as saying: "I wrote it whilst in my teens, and afterwards touched it up. I paid down to the publisher 30*l.* to insure him from being a loser by it. At the end of four years, I found that he had sold about twenty copies. However, I was consoled by reading in a critique on the 'Ode' that I was 'an able writer' or some such expression."

Whoever lived much with him will remember that any reference to the "Ode" was the inevitable prelude to the production of the volume containing the critique,—the "Monthly Review," December 1786. It began thus:—"In these pieces we perceive the hand of an able master. The 'Ode to Superstition' is written with uncommon boldness of language and strength of diction. The author has collected some of the most striking historical facts, to illustrate the tyranny of the demon he addresses, and has exhibited them with the fire and energy proper to lyric poetry. The following stanzas are particularly excellent." The reviewer then quotes, without remarking the resemblance, the very stanzas or strophes which are most palpably imitated from Gray's "Bard." "Alexander's Feast" was also copied in parts, and the result recalls the fable of the ambitious frog, or reminds us of "all the contortions of the Sibyl without one particle of her inspiration." Almost the only lines which do not creak, groan and tremble with the strain, or which bear token of his subsequently matured preference for simple uninverted language, are the following:—

"Hark! who mounts the sacred pyre,
Blooming in her bridal vest?
She hurls the torch! she fans the fire!
To die is to be blest.
She clasps her lord to part no more,
And sighing, sinks! but sinks to soar."

. . . . . .

"Thou spak'st, and lo! a new creation glowed.
Each unhewn mass of living stone
Was clad in horrors, not its own,
And at its base the trembling nations bowed.
Giant Error, darkly grand,
Grasped the globe with iron hand."

The wonder is, that whilst imitating Gray, Rogers was not irresistibly and exclusively attracted by the "Elegy." One would have thought that he, of all others, would have been fascinated by the exquisite finish and sober grace of that incomparable performance. But it was easier to mimic the clamour and clatter of the dithyrambic ode than to catch the pathos and simplicity of the "Elegy" or the "Ode to Eton College."

Mr. Rogers's compositions down to this time, both in verse and prose, leave the impression that he was extremely anxious to write without having anything to write about. He had sharpened and polished his tools, and had acquired no slight dexterity in the use of them, but materials were altogether wanting. He had laid up no stock of thought, sentiment, or observation worthy of being worked up or moulded into form; and his attempts to compensate for this deficiency by artificial fire, borrowed movements, and forced enthusiasm, proved about as successful as those of the German baron who jumped over the chairs and tables to acquire vivacity. Rogers, however, was not to be dispirited by failure. He at length hit upon the right vein, and from the moment he discovered that he was destined to excel by grace, elegance, subdued sentiment, and chastened fancy—not by fervid

passion, lofty imagination, or deep feeling,—his poetic fortune was made.

During the six years that elapsed before he again ventured into print, he visited Paris and Edinburgh, conversed with many who were acting as well as with some who were writing history, and indefinitely extended his knowledge of books, of external nature, of social systems, and of mankind. The firstfruits were the "Pleasures of Memory," published with the name of the author in 1792.

The epoch was fortunately hit upon or judiciously chosen. The old school was wearing out, and the new had not commenced. The poem struck into the happy medium between the precise and conventional style, and the free and natural one. The only competitor formidable from newly acquired popularity, was Cowper. Crabbe's fame was then limited: Darwin never had much: and Burns, incomparably the greatest poetic genius of his generation (1759–1796), was not appreciated in England in his lifetime, or something better than an exciseman's place would have been bestowed upon him. We are therefore not surprised at the immediate success of Rogers's second and better calculated experiment on the public taste. Yet with undeniable merits of a high order, it had little of the genuine inspiration of original genius. The strongest proof of its deficiency in this respect is that, although it has long taken its place as an English classic, none of its mellifluous verses or polished images are freshly remembered, like "The coming events cast their shadows before," of Campbell; or the "Oh, woman, in our hours of ease," of Scott; or the "Oh, ever thus from childhood's hour," of Moore; or the "He who hath bent him o'er the dead," of Byron; or the "Creature not too bright or good," of Wordsworth. Any zealous admirer of these writers will be ready at any moment to justify his or her ad-

miration, by quoting passage after passage. Where is the zealous admirer of Rogers's poetry, who feels qualified, without adequate preparation, to recite six consecutive lines from the "Pleasures of Memory?"

The commencement, and indeed almost everything rural or pastoral in the poem, is too redolent of Goldsmith; and in minute description, Rogers provokes compromising comparisons with Crabbe; but he has never been excelled in the art of blending fancy and feeling with historic incident and philosophical reflection, as in the passage beginning —

> "So Scotia's Queen, as slowly dawned the day,
> Rose on her couch, and gazed her soul away.
> . . . . . .
> Thus kindred objects kindred thoughts inspire,
> As summer clouds flash forth electric fire.
> And hence this spot gives back the joys of youth,
> Warm as the life, and with the mirror's truth.
> Hence homefelt pleasure prompts the Patriot's sigh,
> This makes him wish to live and dare to die.
> . . . . . .
> And hence the charm historic scenes impart;
> Hence Tiber awes, and Avon melts the heart;
> Aërial forms, in Tempe's classic vale,
> Glance through the gloom, and whisper in the gale,
> In wild Vaucluse with love and Laura dwell,
> And watch and weep in Eloisa's cell,"

Elegance of expression and truth of description cannot be more happily united, than in the lines on the bee: —

> "Hark! the bee winds her small but mellow horn,
> Blithe to salute the sunny smile of morn.
> O'er thymy downs she bends her busy course,
> And many a stream allures her to its source.
> 'Tis noon, 'tis night. That eye so finely wrought,
> Beyond the search of sense, the soar of thought,
> Now vainly asks the scenes she left behind:
> Its orb so full, its visions so confined!
> Who guides the patient pilgrim to her cell?
> Who bids her soul with conscious triumph swell?

With conscious truth, retrace the mazy clue
Of summer-scents, that charmed her as she flew?
Hail, Memory, hail! thy universal reign
Guards the least link of Being's glorious chain."

The fondness for alliteration displayed in this poem attracted the attention of the critics; and Rogers used to say that a proposed emendation in the second of the following lines, which form the commencement of the second part, was the best suggestion he ever received from a reviewer —

"Sweet Memory, wafted by thy gentle gale,
Oft up the tide of Time I turn my sail."

The critic's suggestion was that, to complete the alliteration, the line should stand thus —

"Oft up the tide of Time I turn my tail."

The "Pleasures of Memory" ends thus: —

"Hail, Memory, hail! in thy exhaustless mine
From age to age unnumbered treasures shine:
Thought and her shadowy brood thy call obey,
And Place and Time are subject to thy sway;
Thy pleasures most we feel, when most alone,
The only pleasures we can call our own.
Lighter than air, Hope's summer visions die,
If but a fleeting cloud obscure the sky;
If but a beam of sober reason play,
Lo, Fancy's fairy frost-work melts away!
But can the wiles of Art, the grasp of Power,
Snatch the rich relics of a well-spent hour?
These, when the trembling spirit wings her flight,
Pour round her path a stream of living light;
And gild those pure and perfect realms of rest,
Where Virtue triumphs, and her sons are blest."

These are the lines which Mackintosh, thereby giving the measure of his own poetic feeling, used to say were equal to the closing lines of the "Dunciad." This was like saying that Virgil's apostrophe to Marcellus is equal to Homer's Battle of the Gods, the style being essentially distinct; and the real question being,

whether any given degree of grace or sentiment can be placed on a level with the corresponding degree of grandeur or sublimity. We are by no means sure that, if it were necessary to challenge a comparison with Pope, we should not rather rely on one of the passages in which Rogers, by dint of finely-shaded language and felicitous illustration, invests the description of a familiar phenomenon in natural or mental philosophy with the most seductive charms of sensibility and poetry. For example —

> "Ah! who can tell the triumphs of the mind,
> By truth illumined, and by taste refined?
> When age has quenched the eye, and closed the ear,
> Still nerved for action in her native sphere,
> Oft will she rise — with searching glance pursue
> Some long-loved image vanished from her view;
> Dart thro' the deep recesses of the past,
> O'er dusky forms in chains of slumber cast;
> With giant grasp fling back the folds of night,
> And snatch the faithless fugitive to light.
> So thro' the grove the impatient mother flies,
> Each sunless glade, each secret pathway tries;
> Till the thin leaves the truant boy disclose,
> Long on the wood-moss stretched in sweet repose."

Why verses like these should have failed to lay fast and durable hold on the public mind, is a problem well worthy of critical examination. The most plausible solution is suggested by their want of implicity and spontaneity. Their linked sweetness is too long and elaborately drawn out; and the very symmetry and artistic finish of a production may militate against its general popularity. When Campbell complained to James Smith of not having been included in the "Rejected Addresses," he was politely assured that to parody his poetry was as impossible as to caricature his handsome and regular features. "I should like to be amongst them for all that," was his remark; and he was partly right; for what cannot be parodied will not be so often quoted, nor so freshly

remembered. In the preface to the annotated edition of the "Rejected Addresses," Rogers and Campbell are placed on the same footing, and their common exclusion is justified on the same complimentary principle. "The Pleasures of Memory," however, rendered invaluable service by its purity of language and chasteness of tone, which immediately became the objects of improving imitation and elevating rivalry. To it, also, must be assigned the honour of having suggested "The Pleasures of Hope;" and more than one of the detached thoughts and images has obtained popularity and circulation in disguise. As Sir Walter Scott had confessedly never seen Melrose by moonlight when he wrote the famous passage beginning —

> "If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,
> Go visit it by the pale moonlight —
> For the gay beams of lightsome day
> Gild but to flout the ruins gray" —

we may fairly suppose that he borrowed a hint from Rogers's —

> "As the stern grandeur of a Gothic tower
> Awes us less deeply in its morning hour,
> Than when the shades of Time serenely fall
> On every broken arch and ivied wall" —

lines which suggest the mellowing effect of age as well as that of evening.

Nearly six years were to elapse before Rogers had hived up enough for another publication. His "Epistle to a Friend, with other Poems," appeared in 1798. The "Epistle" is a vehicle for conveying, after the manner of Horace and (in parts) of Pope, the writer's notions of social comfort and happiness, as influenced by residence, furniture, books, pictures, and companions, — subjects on all of which he was admirably qualified to speak. His precepts

are delivered in a series of graceful couplets, and enforced by authorities collected in the notes. Of course, he is all for moderation, simplicity, and retirement,—what poet or poetaster is not?—with about the same amount of practical earnestness as Grattan, when he declared he could be content in a small neat house, with cold meat, bread, and beer, *and plenty of claret;* or as a couple from May Fair, who, when they talk of love in a cottage, are dreaming of a cottage like the dairy-house at Taymouth or Cashiobury. All Rogers wanted, was to be able to enjoy every pleasure or luxury he really cared about; and as he did not care about a numerous establishment or a large house, the model villa to which he invites his friend is of restricted dimensions —

> "Here no state chambers in long line unfold,
> Bright with broad mirrors, rough with fretted gold:
> Yet modest ornament with use combined,
> Attracts the eye to exercise the mind.
> *Small change of scene, small space his home requires,*
> *Who leads a life of satisfied desires.*"

This strikes us to be what Partridge would call a *non sequitur.* Like the Presbyterian divine who, after praying that all the lady of the manor's desires might be gratified, judiciously added, "provided they be virtuous,"—Rogers, after laying down that a life of satisfied desires implied a contracted sphere of action, should have added "provided they be limited." The spendthrift who complained there was no living in England like a gentleman under forty thousand a year, would not have led a life of satisfied desires, with small change of scene, or small space to disport in.

Nothing in their way can be better than the fourteen lines in which the poet inculcates the wise

doctrine, that engravings and copies from the best pictures and statues are far preferable to mediocre or second-rate originals.

"What tho' no marble breathes, no canvas glows,
From every point a ray of genius flows.
Be mine to bless the mere mechanic skill
That stamps, renews, and multiplies at will,
And cheaply circulates thro' distant climes
The fairest relics of the purest times.
Here from the mould to conscious being start
These finer forms, the miracles of art;
Here chosen gems, imprest on sulphur, shine
That slept for ages in a second mine;
And here the faithful graver dares to trace
A Michael's grandeur and a Raphael's grace!
Thy gallery, Florence, gilds my humble walls,
And my low roof the Vatican recalls."

The ornaments of the bath are also happily touched off: —

"The shadowy walls record with Attic art,
The strength and beauty which its waves impart;
Here Thetis bending with a mother's fears
Dips her dear boy, whose pride restrains his tears;
There Venus, rising, shrinks with sweet surprise
As her fair self reflected seems to rise."

The "Description of Winter" is marked by the same delicate fancy which is displayed in the "Rape of the Lock" on a different class of phenomena: —

"When Christmas revels in a world of snow,
And bids her berries blush, her carols flow:
His spangling shower when Frost the wizard flings,
Or, borne in ether blue, on viewless wings,
O'er the white pane his silvery foliage weaves,
And gems with icicles the sheltering eaves,—
Thy muffled friend his nectarine wall pursues" —

There is no disputing the eye for nature which fixed and carried off the image of the silvery foliage woven on the white pane. At one of his Sunday breakfasts, he had quoted with decided commendation

Leigh Hunt's couplet on a fountain (in "Rimini"), also selected by Byron as one of the most poetical descriptions of a natural object he was acquainted with:—

> "Clear and compact, till at its height o'errun,
> It shakes its loos'ning silver in the sun."

"I give my vote," said one of the guests, for

> "'O'er the white pane his silvery foliage weaves.'"

Rogers looked for a moment as if he were about to re-enact Parr's reception of the flattering visitor at Birmingham.

Fourteen years elapsed between the publication of the "Epistle to a Friend," and "Columbus," which formed part of a new edition of his poems in 1812, and was followed by "Jacqueline" in 1814. We look upon both these productions as mistakes, especially the first, which is a fragmentary epic, and deals with topics requiring the highest order of imagination to invest them with fitting grandeur and interest. When chasms are left in the narrative, and an author only professes to open glimpses into the past or the future, he can claim no allowance for Homeric slumbers,—for tameness of diction or extravagance of invention. Each detached scene or picture should be complete in its way, for the very reason that it is detached. Rogers has done little more than versify, with less than his usual attention to metre and rhythm, the well-known events in the lives and adventures of Columbus and his companions, interspersed with imitations of Dante, Virgil, and Euripides. His machinery is an *un*happy medium between Pope's and Milton's; and when he made an American deity, or angel of darkness, hight Merion, rise "in pomp of plumage," in the shape of a condor, to descend and "couch on Roldan's ample

breast" in the shape of a vampire, he delivered himself, bound hand and foot, into the hands of the scorner. How he could have read over the following passage of "The Argument," without becoming aware of his danger, must be a mystery to those who are not familiar with the weaknesses of authors when their offspring is concerned: —

"Alarm and despondence on board. He (Columbus) resigns himself to the care of Heaven, and proceeds on his voyage. Meanwhile the deities of America assemble in council, and one of the Genii, the gods of the islanders, announces his approach. 'In vain,' says he, 'have we guarded the Atlantic for ages. A mortal has baffled our power; nor will our votaries arm against him. Yours are a sterner race. Hence, and while we have recourse to stratagem, do you array the nations round your altars, and prepare for an exterminating war.' They disperse *while he is yet speaking*, and in the shape of a Condor, he directs his flight to the fleet. His journey described. He arrives there."

We wish we could add that the conception is redeemed by the execution; but the perusal of the poem is rendered positively disagreeable by the breaks and the constant straining after effect. The most successful contrivance is the use made of the trade-winds; the water-spouts of the New World, also, are felicitously introduced: —

> "And see the heavens bow down, the waters rise,
> And, rising, shoot in columns to the skies,
> That stand, and still when they proceed, retire, —
> As in the Desert burned the sacred fire,
> Moving in silent majesty, — till Night
> Descends and shuts the vision from their sight."

The scorner speedily came forth in the guise of a candid friend. The late Lord Dudley (then Mr. Ward) reviewed "Columbus" in the "Quarterly Review" in a tone of calculated depreciation, made more incisive by the affectation of respect. The poet's feelings may be fancied when he read the polished

quiz upon his deities and his condor, and was asked, "what but extreme haste and carelessness could have occasioned the author of the 'Pleasures of Memory' to mistake for verse such a line as—

"'There silent sate many an unbidden guest.'"

This line will not be found in the later editions, but the two following are in the last —

"And midway on their passage to eternity." (Canto 1.)
"That world a prison-house, full of sights of woe." (Canto 12.)

Nor would Rogers have shown much indulgence for couplets like these by another: —

"Right through the midst, when fetlock deep in gore,
The great Gonzalvo battled with the Moor."

. . . . . .

"He said, he drew: then at his master's frown,
Sullenly sheath'd, plunging the weapon down."

The first might lead a superficial or ill-informed reader to suppose that the great Gonzalvo was a Centaur; and the second is much like saying —

"Swallowed the loaf, gulping each morsel down."

Ward had greatly aggravated his offence by communicating with his intended victim on the subject of the criticism during its composition; and he well merited the characteristic retaliation which it provoked —

"Ward has no heart, they say; but I deny it.
He has a heart, and gets his speeches by it."

According to the author of the "Table Talk," Rogers confessed to have written this epigram, with a little assistance from Richard Sharp. One day, he adds, while Rogers was on bad terms with Ward, Lady D. said to him, "Have you seen Ward lately?" "*What* Ward?" "Why, our Ward, of course." "*Our* Ward! — you may keep him all to yourself."

Ward was not a man to be behindhand in this kind of contest; and his adversary's cadaverous complexion afforded as ample material for jocularity as his own alleged want of heart. Indeed, Jack Bannister maintained that more good things had been said and written on Roger's face than on that of the greatest beauty. It was Ward who asked him why, now that he could afford it, he did not set up his hearse; and it was the same sympathising companion who, when Rogers repeated the couplet,—

> "The robin, with his furtive glance,
> Comes and looks at me askance,"

struck in with, "If it had been a carrion crow, he would have looked you full in the face."

Mackintosh made a gallant effort ("Edinburgh Review," No. 43) to neutralise the corrosive sublimate of Ward's article; but impartial opinion concurred in the main with the less favourable judgment, and even the Vision (Canto 12), which both agreed in praising, is not free from the prevalent faults of the poem,—obvious effort, abruptness, and obscurity.

Matters were not much improved by the publication, two years later (1814), of "Jacqueline" in the same volume with "Lara," which suggested the notion of an innocent maiden choosing a high-bred rake for her travelling companion. If she preserved her virtue, she was tolerably sure to lose her reputation; and

> "Pretty Miss Jacqueline,
> With her nose aquiline,"

afforded fine sport to the wits, and to her noble yokefellow among the rest. The "Corsair" had already got his Kaled, a young lady who did not stand upon trifles and wore small-clothes. How, in a corrupt age, could Jacqueline hope to obtain a preference by dint of the gentle virtues, even though

"Her voice, whate'er she said, enchanted:
Like music, to the heart it went.
And her dark eyes,—how eloquent!
Ask what they would, 'twas granted."

Some years since a story got about touching an application from an American lady of distinction for a ball-ticket for a female friend. The request was politely declined, and the applicant wrote to express her surprise at the slight put upon a young lady, "who, in her own country, was more in the habit of granting favours than of asking them." "She must be like my Jacqueline," said Rogers, when he heard the story; "for Byron would always have it that the line —

"'Ask what *they* would, 'twas granted,'

did not necessarily refer to her eyes."

We had some hopes of Jacqueline, when she left her paternal abode at midnight "a guilty thing and full of fears," or she might have made a sensation by getting drowned, like Lord Ullin's daughter, when

"One lovely arm was stretched for aid,
And one was round her lover."

But when, after so much preliminary weeping and melancholy, it turns out that her departure was *pour le bon motif*, and that D'Arcay's intentions were all along honourable: when she enters safe and sound in person and reputation, hanging on the arm of a young husband, to ask and obtain an aged father's blessing, readers, with palates vitiated by more stimulating food, might be excused for exclaiming like Sheridan when the servant threw down the platewarmer without breaking the plates: "Why, —— it, sir, have you made all that noise for nothing?"

Rogers was very angry at the brief notice taken of this poem in Mr. George Ellis's review of the "Corsair" and "Lara" in the "Quarterly Review,"

as "the highly refined, but somewhat insipid, pastoral tale of 'Jacqueline.'" Lady Byron is reported to have told Rogers in 1851, at Brighton, that her liege lord, on reading Ellis's article, had said, "The man's a fool. 'Jacqueline' is as superior to 'Lara,' as Rogers is to me." We might suspect a double meaning in these words, as in Porson's remark that "'Madoc' will be read when Homer and Virgil are forgotten." But Lord Byron had said nearly the same thing in the preface to the joint publication; and in his Diary of Nov. 23, 1813 (published by Moore), after saying that "Scott is undoubtedly the monarch of Parnassus, and the most English of bards," he continues: "I should place Rogers next in the living list. I value him more, as the last of the *best* school; Moore and Campbell both third." At the same time he could hardly help seeing that "Jacqueline" did not belong to the best school (Pope's); and that to couple this poem with "Lara" was as suicidal and self-sacrificing an act in Rogers, as Byron would have committed, had he consented to print his "Hints from Horace" (which he himself originally preferred to "Childe Harold") in the same volume with "Human Life."

In "Human Life," published in 1819, Rogers was himself again. In it and by it, in our opinion, his genius, if not his fame, reached the culminating point. The subject, or rather range of subjects, exactly suited him; and in this, the masterpiece of his matured powers, he occasionally combines the worldly wisdom of Horace, and the glancing philosophy of Pope, with the tender melancholy of Goldsmith and Cowper's mastery over domestic scenes and affections. The similarity in parts to Schiller's "Song of the Bell" is certainly striking; but the common character of the subject, and the widely different style of versification, completely repel all suspicion of plagiarism.

Nothing can be happier than the rapid introductory sketch of the four epochs — the birth, the coming of age, the marriage, and the death of the proprietor of the old manor-house; for example: —

> "And soon again shall music swell the breeze;
> Soon, issuing forth, shall glitter through the trees,
> Vestures of nuptial white; and hymns be sung,
> And violets scattered round; and old and young,
> In every cottage porch with garlands green,
> Stand still to gaze, and, gazing, bless the scene.
> While, her dark eyes declining, by his side,
> Moves in her virgin veil, the gentle bride."

Spenser himself never painted with words more distinctly; though when the "Faery Queen" was read aloud to an old lady deprived of sight, she remarked that it was as if a succession of pictures had been held up before her. Admirably, again, is indicated that instinctive sense of immortality, that vague longing for something better than the evanescent realities of life, by which the noblest minds are stimulated and disturbed unceasingly. We refer to the passage beginning —

> "Do what he will he cannot realise
> Half he conceives, the glorious vision flies.
> Go where he may, he cannot hope to find
> The truth, the beauty, pictured in his mind."

The expansion and effusion of heart, with the delicious interchange of thought and feeling, which follow the acceptance of the lover by his future wife, are thus described: —

> "Then come those full confidings of the past;
> All sunshine now, where all was overcast.
> Then do they wander till the day is gone,
> Lost in each other; and when night steals on,
> Covering them round, how sweet her accents are!
> Oh, when she turns and speaks, her voice is far,
> Far above singing! but soon nothing stirs
> To break the silence; joy like his, like hers,
> Deals not in words. And now the shadows close,
> Now in the glimmering, dying light she grows

Less and less earthly! As departs the day,
All that was mortal seems to melt away,
Till, like a gift resumed as soon as given,
She fades at last into a spirit from heaven."

Schiller takes the comparatively prosaic view of marriage, as the death of sentiment, and the grave of romance.* Rogers strikes into a more original and (all things considered) perhaps truer vein. At least, for the credit of poor human nature, we will hope so. He bids the young bridegroom to regard his bride as "a guardian angel o'er his life presiding;" and warns both of them, in lines that deserve to be written in gold over every hearth, that —

"The soul of music slumbers in the shell,
Till waked and kindled by the master's spell;
And feeling hearts, touch them but rightly, pour
A thousand melodies unheard before."

As we proceed from love and marriage to the closing scene, the death-bed, our admiration is still, with few pauses or interruptions, on the ascending scale: —

"When on his couch he sinks at last to rest,
Those by his counsel saved, his power redress'd,
. . . . . .
Come and stand round — the widow and her child,
As when she first forgot her tears and smiled.
They who watch by him see not, but he sees,
Sees and exults — Were ever dreams like these?
Those who watch by him, hear not; but he hears,
And Earth recedes, and Heaven itself appears!"

This is genuine poetry. It will bear any test or criterion, and will fare best by being tried by Wordsworth's, — the extent to which the imagination blends itself with the scene supposed to be passing, and realises it to the mind's eye.

* "Mit dem Gürtel, mit dem Schleier,
Reisst der schöne Wahn entzwei."
(Das Lied von der Glocke.)

The first part of "Italy" was published anonymously in 1822; and the secret must have been tolerably well kept for a period, since the "Literary Gazette" confidently attributed the authorship to Southey. The poem was subsequently completed at intervals; and in its finished state, offers a rich treat to the scholar, the virtuoso, and the lettered traveller. No one would have exclaimed more enthusiastically, or with less call for factitious warmth, than Rogers: "Far from me, and my friends, be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue;" and, go where he would, his memory was stored with every description of image or incident that could evoke or harmonise with the genius of the place.

There is a great deal more to see and feel in Italy than objects or impressions which the classic student can alone, or best, appreciate. She has been three times the mistress of the world,—by Arms, by Art, by Faith; and her mediæval annals teem with the genuine romance of history. Venice, Padua, Ferrara, Bologna, Florence, Rome, Naples,—each of these names opens a separate treasure-house of associations; and to enjoy and fully profit by his tour, the traveller should have read Guicciardini, Giannone, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Vasari, besides Pliny, Horace, and Virgil; besides having a trained eye for the masterpieces of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Rogers started with reading and taste enough for an accomplished traveller, and perhaps more than enough for the poet who was to celebrate what he saw. His mind was obviously overlaid by his acquired knowledge: his invention was stifled by his memory: when he wished to record an impression, he involuntarily reverted to what an admired author had said on the same subject; and we strongly suspect that what really charms

so many cultivated readers of this poem, is that they frequently find their favourite passages reproduced with a certain air of novelty. Thus the fine passage beginning

"O Italy, how beautiful thou art!"

recalls Filicaja's famous sonnet; and

"The very dust we tread, stirs as with life,"

comes too near

"Pause, for thy tread is on a nation's dust."

His reflections on entering Rome are tame for poetry, and will not bear a comparison with Alison's (in the "Essay on Taste"), although conveyed in the humbler vehicle of prose. Rogers is more at home in the Campagna of Rome, at Venice, on approaching Genoa from the sea, or on the Alps, in ascending and descending which he is inspired with what strike us as the finest and truest of his descriptive passages.

"Italy" was the last of his formal and deliberate appeals to the public; but down to his ninetieth year he occasionally wrote verses, and, whilst his mental powers lasted, he was unceasingly occupied in polishing his couplets and correcting or enriching his notes. A bear keeping itself alive by sucking its paws, was suggested as a parallel case, and was repeated to him. The real culprit, on being charged with the simile, coolly assigned it to Luttrell, who laughingly consented to accept it "with its responsibilities:" and it is by no means a bad illustration of the manner in which Rogers coddled and dandled his literary productions and reputation to the last.

Amongst the records of Sydney Smith's conversation is an entry which evidently refers to Rogers:

"'How is ——?' 'He is not very well.' 'Why, what

is the matter?' 'Oh, don't you know he has produced a couplet? When our friend is delivered of a couplet, with infinite pain and labour, he takes to his bed, has straw laid down, the knocker tied up, expects his friends to call and make inquiries, and the answer at the door invariably is, Mr. —— and his little couplet are as well as can be expected.' When he produces an Alexandrine, he keeps his bed a day longer."

He has left in the shape of notes, or episodical narratives (like Montorio, and the Bag of Gold, in "Italy"), the choicest collection of anecdotes and quotations, and some of the most exquisite pieces of prose composition in the language. Where do we find more happily expressed than in the introductory paragraphs of "Marco Griffoni," a train of reflection which recent events have forced upon mankind all the world over?

"War is a game at which all are sure to lose, sooner or later, play they how they will; yet every nation has delighted in war, and none more in their day than the little republic of Genoa, whose galleys, while she had any, were always burning and sinking those of the Pisans, the Venetians, the Greeks, or the Turks: Christian and infidel alike to her.

"But experience, when dearly bought, is seldom thrown away altogether. A moment of sober reflection came at last: and after a victory the most splendid and ruinous of any in her annals, she resolved from that day and for ever to live at peace with all mankind; having in her long career acquired nothing but glory, and a tax on every article of life."

Mackintosh used to cite the short essay on "National Prejudices" in "Italy," as perfect both in thought and style. The following paragraphs will enable the reader to estimate the justness of the commendation. The immediate topic is the prevalence of assassination at Rome: —

"It would lessen very much the severity with which men judge of each other, if they would but trace effects to their

causes, and observe the progress of things in the moral as accurately as in the physical world. When we condemn millions in the mass as vindictive and sanguinary, we should remember that, wherever justice is ill-administered, the injured will redress themselves. Robbery provokes to robbery: murder to assassination. Resentments become hereditary; and what began in disorder, ends as if all Hell had broke loose.

"Laws create a habit of self-restraint, not only by the influence of fear, but by regulating in its exercise the passion of revenge. If they overawe the bad by the prospect of a punishment certain and well-defined, they console the injured by the infliction of that punishment; and, as the infliction is a public act, it excites and entails no enmity. The laws are offended; and the community for its own sake pursues and overtakes the offender; often without the concurrence of the sufferer, sometimes against his wishes.

"Now those who were not born, like ourselves, to such advantages, we should surely rather pity than hate; and, when at length they venture to turn against their rulers, we should lament, not wonder at their excesses; remembering that nations are naturally patient and long-suffering, and seldom rise in rebellion till they are so degraded by a bad government as to be almost incapable of a good one."

One of Rogers's peculiar fancies was that even the best writers might be improved by condensation; and it was vain to warn him that to strip Jeremy Taylor or Burke of what he called redundancies overlaying the sense, was like stripping a tree of its blossoms and foliage, with the view of bringing out the massive roundness of the trunk. "There," he exclaimed one evening, after displaying one of Burke's noblest effusions (in which every word has its appointed task) reduced to less than one half of its original dimensions,—"there, concentrated as it now is, it would blow up a cathedral." "Not," he added after a short pause, "that Burke would like it to be used for such a purpose." In a note to the last canto of "Columbus," may be seen a specimen of this system

of condensation; the famous passage in which the Angel addresses Lord Bathurst being reduced to little more than a *caput mortuum*. It was a constant source of triumph to him that he had told within the compass of a moderate paragraph, an anecdote to which Wordsworth devotes twenty-three lines of verse, and Mr. R. M. Milnes twenty-eight. It stands thus in Rogers's prose version: —

"You admire that picture, said an old Dominican to me at Padua, as I stood contemplating a Last Supper in the refectory of his convent, the figures as large as the life. I have sat at my meals before it for seven and forty years; and such are the changes that have taken place among us — so many have come and gone in the time — that, when I look upon the company there — upon those who are sitting at that table, silent as they are — I am sometimes inclined to think that we, and not they, are the shadows." (*Italy*, p. 312.)

There was one consequence of having printed his best anecdotes to which he submitted reluctantly. He was loth to surrender the privilege of relating them; and he was comically perplexed between the pleasure of having told what was accepted as new by the company, and disappointment at finding that his cherished notes had been forgotten or never read at all. "You don't seem to know where that comes from," became at last his frequent reproach to a friend, who knew all his notes by heart, yet listened to them with an air of interest. "I will show you whether I do or not," was the rejoinder; and during their two or three next meetings, he invariably gave the reference to each story as it was told. Rogers could not bear this, and a compromise was effected; he agreeing to give credit for the knowledge which had only been suppressed from courtesy.

A portion of the "parting word" which he addressed to the readers of "Italy," will form an apt introduction to our remarks on those features of his

character and elements of his reputation which must be learnt and studied apart from his writings: —

> "Nature denied him much,
> But gave him at his birth what most he values;
> A passionate love for music, sculpture, painting,
> For poetry, the language of the gods,
> For all things here, or grand or beautiful,
> A setting sun, a lake among the mountains,
> The light of an ingenuous countenance,
> And what transcends them all, a noble action.
> Nature denied him much, but gave him more;
> And ever, ever grateful should he be,
> Though from his cheek, ere yet the down was there,
> Health fled; for in his heaviest hours would come
> Gleams such as come not now; nor failed he then
> (Then and through life his happiest privilege)
> Full oft to wander where the Muses haunt,
> Smit with the love of song."

Nature did not give him a passionate love for anything, animate or inanimate —

> "Not his the wealth to some large natures lent,
> Divinely lavish, even when misspent;
> That liberal sunshine of exuberant soul,
> Thought, sense, affection, warming up the whole."

What she gave him — and a rich endowment it is — was an exquisite sensibility to excellence, or (what is nearly the same thing) the power of deriving gratification from the most refined objects of human enjoyment: and he devoted his long life to the cultivation of this faculty till it reached the highest degree of perfection to which taste, without enthusiasm and cultivated with an Epicurean aim, can be deemed capable of attaining.

So striking a confirmation of our own theory of his character has just reached us from an accomplished friend, who knew and loved him, that we are tempted to quote part of it: — "I believe no man ever was so much attended to and thought of, who had so slender a fortune and such calm abilities. His God was Harmony; and over his life Harmony presided

sitting on a lukewarm cloud. He was *not* the poet, sage, and philosopher people expect to find he was; but a man in whom the tastes (rare fact) preponderated over the passions, who defrayed the expenses of his tastes as other men make outlay for the gratification of their passions. He did nothing rash. I am sure Rogers as a baby never fell down unless he was pushed; but walked from chair to chair in the drawing-room, steadily and quietly, till he reached the place where the sunbeam fell on the carpet. He must always have preferred a lullaby to the merriest game of romps; and, if he could have spoken, would have begged his long clothes might be made of fine mull muslin instead of cambric or jacquenot; the first fabric being of incomparable softness, and the two latter capable of that which he loathed, starch."

Everything around and about him spoke the same language and told the same story. The voluminous catalogue of his accumulations has been recently perused by thousands; and his treasures have been laid bare for weeks to the inspection of connoisseurs under every disadvantage of confusion; yet (making due allowance for things, which, if they ever belonged to him, had been flung aside into drawers or cupboards) the universal impression has been astonishment at the judgment, knowledge, forbearance, and eye for beauty throughout the whole range of art, displayed by the collector. It was said of a celebrated lawyer, that he had no rubbish in his head: it might have been said of Rogers (judging only from what met the eye) that he had no rubbish in his house. Varied as were his stores, they were not heaped one upon another, or thrown into incongruous groups; his pictures, statues, bronzes, vazes, medals, curious books, and precious manuscripts, simply supplied the place of the ordinary ornamental furniture of a gentleman's house; and there was nothing beyond their intrinsic excellence to

remind the visitor that almost every object his eye fell upon was a priceless gem, a coveted rarity, or an acknowledged masterpiece. In this respect, as in most others, the superiority of the tenant of 22, St. James' Place to the fastidious lord of Strawberry Hill, shone conspicuous.

It should also be remembered that Rogers was at no time overburdened with wealth; and that sixty years since the patronage of art and literature was confined to the most opulent of our nobles and landed gentry; who devoted their thousands per annum to furnish a gallery, with the same indiscriminating prodigality with which their less polished compeers proceeded to form a racing stud. There were no railway kings, or Liverpool merchants, or Manchester manufacturers, to bid for Wilsons or Gainsboroughs, as they now bid for the productions, as fast as they can be finished, of Landseer, Eastlake, Leslie, Millais, Mulready, Hart, Roberts, Stanfield, or Maclise; nor, under any circumstances, would it be easy to over-estimate the beneficial influence of a judge and occasional purchaser, like Mr. Rogers, mingling familiarly with artists, distinguishing genuine originality from its plausible counterfeit, encouraging the first faint struggles of modest merit, and controlling the extravagance into which genius is too often hurried by its characteristic rashness or self-confidence. Although his limited house-room and fortune commonly restricted his personal acquisitions to objects of known value, he had an almost unerring eye for coming success and celebrity. "I envy and admire your courage in buying Turners," was his remark to Mr. Munro of Novar, when that gentleman, in well-founded reliance on his own taste and knowledge, ventured to anticipate the verdict of posterity and Mr. Ruskin.

The impression left on guests of taste and sensi-

bility is admirably described in the following lines by one of the most courted and esteemed of them: —

"Who can forget, who at thy social board
Hath sat, and seen the pictures richly stored,
In all their tints of glory and of gloom,
Brightening the precincts of thy quiet room;
With busts and statues full of that deep grace
Which modern hands have lost the skill to trace;
Fragments of beauty, perfect as thy song
On that sweet land to which they did belong, —
Th' exact and classic taste by thee displayed;
Not with a rich man's idle fond parade,
Not with the pomp of some vain connoisseur,
Proud of his bargains, of his judgment sure;
But with the feelings kind and sad, of one
Who thro' far countries wandering hath gone,
And brought away dear keepsakes, to remind
His heart and home of all he left behind."*

Amongst his "fragments of beauty," were some female hands and feet in marble, carefully preserved under glass cases which it was treason to remove. One evening after dinner, when the male guests rejoined the ladies in the drawing room, a beauty in the full flush of rank and fashion, whose lightest caprice was law, called to him to come and look at her feet, and he was not a little amused to find that she had disposed a pair of his marble models under her drapery so as to make them occupy the place of her own feet; and (barring nudity and immobility) they might have realised the tempting vision of Suckling: —

"Her feet beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice stole in and out,
As if they feared the light."

The illustrated edition of "Italy" was, we believe, the first instance in which (since Boydell's time) first-class artists were engaged without regard to expense for such a purpose. It was speedily followed by a

* The Dream, and other Poems. By the Honourable Mrs. Norton, p. 180.

corresponding edition of the "Poems;" and every succeeding reprint of Rogers's works has been enriched by engravings or vignettes from drawings or designs by the first of modern English painters, including Edwin Landseer, Eastlake, Turner, Stothard, and Calcott. Many of them are quite perfect in their way; and the author superintended them with the same care with which he polished his own verses. The two first illustrated editions of "Italy" and the "Poems" cost him about 15,000*l.*, and there was a period when the speculation threatened to be a losing one. Turner was to have received 50*l.* a piece for his drawings, but on its being represented to him that Rogers had miscalculated the probable returns, the artist (who has been ignorantly accused of covetousness) immediately offered to take them back; and it was eventually arranged that he should do so, receiving 5*l.* a piece for the use of them.

Rogers's musical taste was a natural gift, the result of organisation, and partook very slightly of the acquired or conventional quality. He delighted in sweet sounds, in soft flowing airs, in tunes linked with pleasing associations, and in simple melodies, rather than in complicated harmonies. He would have agreed with the critic, who on being informed that a brilliant performance just concluded was extremely difficult, ejaculated, "I wish it had been impossible." Amongst Italian composers, Bellini was his favourite. When he dined at home and alone, it was his custom to have an Italian organ-grinder playing in the hall, the organ being set to the Sicilian Mariners' air and other popular tunes of the South. He kept nightingales in cages on his staircase and in his bedroom, closely covered up from the light, to sing to him. The morning was the time when he enjoyed music most: he would then listen for hours to female voices, and we need

hardly add that he especially delighted in what may be called rather the musical recitation than the singing of Moore. Nothing annoyed him more than to hear the songs he loved profaned by inferior execution. "Can *you* stay and bear it?" was his muttered remonstrance to a friend whom he fairly dragged out of the room when an accomplished amateur was throwing as much soul as he could muster into —

"Give smiles to those who love you less,
But keep your tears for me."

This friend had recently spent an evening at Sloperton Cottage, during which Moore sang readily every song that was suggested to him, having first announced that he would only attempt those of the more gay and inspiriting kind; his nervous system having been a good deal shaken by a domestic affliction. Mrs. Moore, who watched with considerate affection to see that he did not unconsciously transgress this rule, left the room; and he began "When midst the fair I meet," — but on coming to the lines just mentioned his voice faltered, his hands fell motionless on the piano, and he burst into tears. It was to this incident, which had been related to Rogers, that he referred in his vehement remonstrance.

On another occasion, a breakfast party, one of the guests sang one of Moore's songs in Moore's presence, to the evident discomposure of the poet. "Well," said Rogers, "I have seen the bravest men of my time: I have seen Nelson, Wellington, and Ney, but our friend is the bravest of them all."

One of the few passages of Shakspeare which he heard or repeated with complacency was: —

"Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low; an excellent thing in woman."

Natural sweetness of tone did not satisfy him either in reading or singing. One of his female acquaint-

ance, whose voice is singularly rich and musical, relates that he once asked her to read out some MS. verses of Moore's or Byron's which were pasted on the fly-leaf of one of his books. What he called her sing-song mode of reading so irritated him, that he snatched the paper out of her hands and (to use her own words) read it aloud himself most touchingly and musically.

Rogers was hardly cold in his grave, when the book named at the head of this article appeared under the auspices of his confidential publisher, Mr. Moxon. On its announcement, our hopes rose high. If we despaired of another Boswell, we anticipated something not inferior to Hazlitt's "Conversations with Northcote;" and ample materials might have been accumulated by a judicious note-taker for an entertaining and instructive volume, which would have done justice to the "Talk" it aspired to record. We regret to be obliged to say that this book is in no one respect a creditable one; and the circumstance of its having been brought out anonymously throws the main responsibility on the publisher.

In the first place, we doubt the propriety of printing as the "Table Talk of Samuel Rogers" the half-remembered and garbled contents of sundry well-known copy-books, in which his recollections were set down in his own condensed and felicitous language. We allude particularly to his notes of conversations with Horner, Tooke, Grattan, Fox, Erskine, the Duke of Wellington, &c., which, we presume, are now in the possession of his executors, and some time or other will be accurately given to the world. As well might a note-keeping friend carry off an imperfect recollection of an original work that had been read to him in manuscript, and publish an abstract of it for profit.

In the second place, we impugn the qualifications

of the compiler for his self-imposed task; for he has repeatedly made Rogers use the very phraseology he notoriously disliked, and fall into errors of which he would have been ashamed.

For example: —

"I paid five guineas (in conjunction with Boddington) for a *loge* at Tooke's trial. It was the custom in those days (and perhaps is so still) to place bunches of strong-smelling plants of different sorts at the bar, where the criminal was *to sit* (I suppose to purify the air from the contagion of his presence!) This was done at Tooke's trial: but, as soon as he was brought in, he indignantly swept them away with his handkerchief. The trial lasted six days. Erskine (than whom nobody had ever more power with the jury, — he would frequently address them as 'his little-twelvers') defended Tooke most admirably." (p. 128).

Rogers never spoke of having taken a *loge* or box either, on such an occasion. So nice an observer must have seen that bunches of strong-smelling plants or flowers were placed upon the cushions of the judicial bench as well as at the bar where the criminal *stands;* and he never could have understood Erskine as saying that he actually addressed a jury as "his little-twelvers."

The repartee given to Dunning (p. 56), which was quite inapplicable to Lord Mansfield, is an old joke from Anstey's "Pleader's Guide;" and if Rogers (p. 49) really describe Lord Ellenborough as endowed with "infinite wit," he probably gave some more convincing examples than the joke about Lord Kenyon's "laying down" his pocket-handkerchief, or than a touch of coarse humour like the following: —

"A lawyer one day pleading before him, and using several times the expression 'my unfortunate client,' Lord Ellenborough suddenly interrupted him: 'There, sir, the court is with you.'"

It was a young lawyer in his first case. He began,

"My Lords, my unfortunate client. My Lords, my unfortunate client." "Proceed, sir," said Lord Ellenborough, "*so far* the court is quite with you."

To tell correctly the well-known story of the wig would require more space than it is worth; and this compiler's version of a shorter one will sufficiently illustrate his infelicity as a carrier of good things.

"The English highwaymen of former days (indeed, the race is now extinct) were remarkably well-bred personages. Thomas Grenville, while travelling with Lord Derby, and Lord Tankerville, while travelling with his father, were attacked by highwaymen; on both occasions six or seven shots were exchanged between them and the highwaymen; and when the parties assailed had expended all their ammunition, the highwaymen came up to them, and took their purses in the politest manner possible" (p. 198).

According to Mr. Grenville, whom Rogers always conscientiously repeated, after the travellers had delivered up their purses, the highwaymen said, "What scoundrels you must be, to interfere with gentlemen about their business on the road." Mr. Grenville (and Rogers after him) used to follow up the story, by relating how, one night when he was walking down Hay Hill, he heard cries of "stop thief," and saw a man on horseback dash down the steps of Lansdowne Passage, and escape; adding, that, to prevent such a thing happening again, the iron bar was put up.

The following is another of Mr. Grenville's stories, which Rogers used to repeat correctly, and which the author of the "Table Talk" has spoiled: —

"I have often heard the Duke of York relate how he and brother George (George the Fourth), when young men, were robbed by foot-pads on Hay Hill. They had dined that day at Devonshire House, and then gone home to lay aside their court dresses, and afterwards proceeded to a house

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of a certain description in the neighbourhood of Berkeley Square. They were returning from it in a hackney coach, late at night, when some footpads stopped them on Hay Hill, and carried off their purses, watches, &c." (p. 162).

The footpads were a party of their own wild set. It was a repetition of Prince Hal and Poins's frolic, except that royalty was passive instead of active this time; and the two princes showed the white feather so ludicrously, that the pretended footpads thought it best to pocket the booty and keep their own secret. The learned in French *ana* will remember that a similar trick was once attempted with Turenne, who showed his habitual courage and presence of mind. "If you had succeeded in frightening me," was his cool remark on the avowal of the frolic, "I would have killed you and myself within the hour."

The remarks on Mrs. Barbauld, attributed to Fox, are so vague and wide of the mark, that it is difficult to imagine Rogers repeating them without specifying their inaccuracies. Her "Life of Richardson," which Fox praises, was written in 1804. Her "Books for Children" were written before the late Lord Denman, her pupil, had attained his fourth year. The "First Lessons" were composed at an earlier period, for her adopted son, Charles Aikin. She wrote no more children's books when she had no children to educate; nor was it "waste of talents" at any time to write such children's books as hers. When she had left off writing from domestic anxiety, Rogers urged her to resume her pen; and he used a powerful incentive when he told her that Fox had pronounced her to be the best prose writer in the language.

During the closing years of his life, Rogers often told the same story with variations, and a duly qualified reminiscent might be expected to preserve the best version. The compiler of this book has commonly managed to select the worst. Let his account of the

visit to Coleridge (p. 203) be compared with the following which was supplied by a friend: —

"Wordsworth and myself," said Rogers, "had walked to Highgate to call on Coleridge, when he was living at Gillman's. We sat with him two hours, he talking the whole time without intermission. When we left the house, we walked for some time without speaking—'What a wonderful man he is!' exclaimed Wordsworth. 'Wonderful, indeed,' said I. 'What depth of thought, what richness of expression!' continued Wordsworth. 'There's nothing like him that ever I heard,' rejoined I,—another pause. 'Pray,' inquired Wordsworth, 'did you precisely understand what he said about the Kantian philosophy?' *R.* 'Not precisely.' *W.* 'Or about the plurality of worlds?' *R.* 'I can't say I did. In fact, if the truth must out, I did not understand a syllable from one end of his monologue to the other." *W.* 'No more did I.'"

At p. 287 we find, "When his physician advised him to take a walk upon an empty stomach, Sydney Smith asked 'upon whose?'" The advice was to take *exercise;* and the joke is older than Sydney Smith; in justice to whom it should be added that he always indignantly repudiated the *foie gras* theory of Heaven attributed to him in the same passage.

At p. 288 Rogers is made to say, "Witty as Smith was, I have seen him at my own house absolutely overpowered by the superior *facetiousness* of William Bankes." This is preposterous. William Bankes certainly possessed extraordinary powers of conversation, but they were not in the facetious line, and he was no match for Sydney Smith. What Rogers said was that Bankes "got the first innings" and kept it through two courses. The same gentleman once performed a similar exploit at Apsley House at a party made expressly for Sir Walter Scott. On this occasion, whenever Bankes paused, a well-known reviewer (the agreeable individual whom the late

Lord Rokeby christened the Boa Contradictor) struck in, and the result was, that the Author of Waverley's voice was never heard at all. Unless (which was a rare occurrence) Sydney Smith became irritated, he was essentially well-bred, and any one gifted with a loud voice and ready utterance might have talked him down.

Indications are not wanting that the compiler was not on such intimate terms with Rogers as he would fain lead the public to believe. Thus:—

"At one time, when I gave a dinner, I used to have candles placed all round the dining room, and *high up*, in order to show off the pictures. I asked Smith how he liked this plan. 'Not at all,' he replied; 'above there is a blaze of light, and below, nothing but darkness and gnashing of teeth'" (p. 287).

Any one who ever dined at Rogers's must surely have remembered that the room was lighted by sconces fixed in the wall, and that the light, which was not "high up," was reflected from the pictures.

To demonstrate all the demerits of this book, would be to rewrite half of it at least. Its merit or utility consists in the aid or stimulant it may supply to the recollections of others, and in its conveying some notion of the kind of conversation in which Rogers delighted. His choice of topics, not his mode of treating them, may be collected from it. These were books, pictures, morals, manners, literary history, the drama, men and women of genius,—anything or everything but the idle gossip, the unidea'd chatter, half made up of proper names, in which the idle population of London contrive to occupy their time. A morning spent at his breakfast-table was almost invariably well spent. Vacant-minded and uncongenial was the man or woman who did not come away wiser or better.

Goethe says that one capital mode of preserving the mind healthful and the taste pure, is to begin the day by reading some good poetry, hearing some good music, and contemplating a fine picture. This is what Rogers literally did, and induced his guests to do. Most days when the party was small and disposed to linger over the intellectual portion of the entertainment, he would send for his favourite authors, and read aloud the passages he had marked, pausing at times to note the changes in his own or the popular appreciation. If a fine passage was alluded to by others, "Find it for me," was the word; and "Edmund," the most intelligent of improvised librarians, was despatched for the volume. "That lad," remarked Rogers, "would find not only any book *in* the house, but I begin to think, any book *out* of the house."

Without going so far as Byron, who one day said to Moore, "Well, after all, Tom, don't you think Shakspeare was something of a humbug?"—Rogers had little real admiration for the greatest of poets: and he frequently read aloud from Ben Jonson's "Discoveries:"—"I remember the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakspeare, that in his writings, whatsoever he penned, he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, 'Would he had blotted out a thousand!'" Rogers always laid a strong emphasis on the concluding sentence. He one morning challenged the company to produce a passage from Shakspeare which would not have been improved by blotting; and after picking many beautiful specimens to pieces, he was with difficulty silenced by the one beginning—

"How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank."

A single inharmonious or superfluous word, like the crumpled rose-leaf on the couch, made him restless

and captious, and his canons of criticism were fatal to most first-class poetry. He was constantly holding up to censure the remark of a brilliant and popular writer, that there is always something shadowy and vague in the very highest productions of the imagination; yet surely the very essence of sublimity is to be undefined and limitless —

> "What *seemed* its head,
> The likeness of a kingly crown had on."

He is reported, we believe correctly, as saying,— "When I was travelling in Italy, I made two authors my constant study for versification,—Milton and Crowe." Yet Crowe's versification is commonly inharmonious, his descriptions are laboured, and his thoughts forced. The truth is, Rogers had little or none of the analytical or self-examining faculty, so indispensable in criticising either books or men. He bestowed praise or censure as he was pleased or displeased, without reflecting that when an impression is what the Germans call "subjective," it is a most deceptive test of merit or demerit in the object. Thus he once challenged his guests to produce a better verse than —

> "Those who came to scoff, remained to pray;"

which has no one distinctive quality of poetry; and he could hardly be brought to admit the poetic superiority of another line in the same passage: —

> "As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
> *Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm.*"

In reading, he followed Bacon's maxim: to read much, not many things — *multum legere, non multa.* He used to say, "When a new book comes out, I read an old one." He often invited popular authors to his house, and spoke to them of their writings, without

having read a page of them. His first acquaintance with the many admirable creations of Mr. Dickens's genius was "Little Nelly." One of the last compositions which he read slowly and carefully, and praised emphatically, was the Duke of Newcastle's dispatch to Lord Raglan on the Battle of the Alma.

"Be it mine," writes Gray, "to lie all day long on a sofa and read eternal new novels of Marivaux and Crebillon." This having been quoted at one of Rogers's breakfasts, at which three persons were present besides himself, he asked all in succession whether they had read "Marianne." They all replied in the negative. "Then I will lend you each a copy," and the three copies were immediately produced. He strongly denounced modern French novels. At a breakfast party, consisting of two gentlemen, and two young ladies of sixteen and seventeen with their governess, he produced Scribe's "Tonadillas;" and after expatiating on the moral tendency of the first story, gave the two volumes to the young ladies to take home with them. The next morning, one of the male guests informed him of the true character of the book, all except the first story being in the most corrupting style of a corrupt school. He started off to redeem his error, but his fair friends had gone into the country and judiciously carried "Tonadillas" along with them. "You will never," he vowed, "see a modern French novel in my house again."

He often read from his Notes Rousseau's profession of "un goût vif pour les déjeûners. C'est le tems de la journée où nous sommes le plus tranquilles, où nous causons le plus à notre aise." It was a current joke that he asked people to breakfast by way of probation for dinner; but his breakfast parties (till the unwillingness to be alone made him less discriminating) were made for those with whom he wished to live socially, and his dinners, comparatively speaking,

were affairs of necessity or form. Even in his happiest moods, he was not convivial: his spirits never rose above temperate: he disliked loud talking or laughing; and unless some distinguished personage, or privileged wit, was there to break the ice and keep up the ball, the conversation at his dinners not unfrequently flagged. It seemed to be, and perhaps was, toned down by the subdued light, which left half the room in shadow, and speedily awoke the fairer portion of the company to the disagreeable consciousness that their complexions were looking muddy and their toilettes the opposite of fresh. After making every allowance for this drawback, however, his dinners were justly reckoned amongst the pleasantest in Town; and all the diaries of (or relating to) the celebrated characters that have figured on the stage of London life during the last fifty years, bear ample testimony to the fact. Moore's and Byron's alone commemorate remarkable parties enough to give their host immortality as an Amphitryon, and they show, moreover, that he never fell into the weakness of which he is made ("Table Talk," p. 175) to accuse Bishop Marlay, that of "giving great dinners chiefly to people of rank and fashion, foolish men and foolish women." Here are two extracts from Byron's Diary for 1814:—

"Sunday, March 6. On Tuesday last dined with Rogers: Madame de Staël, Mackintosh, Sheridan, Erskine, and Payne Knight, Lady Donegall and Miss R. there. Sheridan told a very good story of himself and Madame de Recamier's handkerchief. Erskine a few good stories of himself only.

"March 10th. Thor's day. On Tuesday dined with Rogers: Mackintosh, Sheridan, Sharpe. Much talk and good, all except my own little prattlement. Set down Sheridan at Brookes's, where, by the by, he could not well set down himself, as he and I were the only drinkers."

Rogers used to relate that, when Madame de Staël

first arrived in England in the fulness of her fame, she was invited to one of the large evening parties at Lansdowne House; and after deliberating on the best mode of making her *début*, she requested him to stand with her in a conspicuous portion of the chief saloon, so that she might be first seen by the London world of fashion and politics in close communion with literature.

During the last half of his life, most foreigners of distinction, with many who had no claim on his notice beyond avowed admiration or curiosity, made a point of getting introduced to him, and an introduction almost always implied an invitation to breakfast. He was partial to Americans, both out of gratitude for his popularity in the United States, and because they did not compel him to speak French, in which he never conversed fluently or at his ease. The author of the "Table Talk" has transferred to Talleyrand's dinner-table a brief colloquy with Lamartine, which Rogers always used to mention as having occurred at one of his own breakfasts.

"Lamartine is a man of genius, but very affected. Talleyrand, when in London, invited me to meet him, and placed me beside him at dinner. I asked him, 'Are you acquainted with Beranger?' 'No: he wished to be introduced to me, but I declined it.' 'I would go,' said I, 'a league to see him.' This was nearly all our conversation: he did not choose to talk. In short, he was so disagreeable, that, some days after, both Talleyrand and the Duchess di Dino apologised to me for his ill-breeding" (p. 253).

The more authentic version is that Rogers, not allowing for the literary and political feuds of Paris (although he had lived in times when a Tory poet would not willingly have remained in the same room with a Radical), eagerly inquired of Lamartine, who doubtless thought himself a more legitimate subject of interest, what sort of a man Beranger was, and

what he was about. "*Je ne le connais pas*," said Lamartine. "*Je vous plains*," rejoined Rogers.

He was still more unlucky with August von Schlegel, whom he asked if, since Goethe's death, there had been any poets in Germany. "I am a poet," was the indignant response.

The Count and Countess de Montalembert were at one of his breakfasts in 1839. When they had left the room, he remarked to the remaining guests: "I envy that young man, not for his youth, nor for his name, nor even for his handsome wife, but for his faith. He seems to believe in something; and that makes a man really happy."

Most appropriately might Rogers have exclaimed with Horace —

> "Quicquid sum ego, quamvis
> Infra Lucili censum ingeniumque, tamen me
> Cum magnis vixisse invita fatebitur usque
> Invidia."—

The solid advantages of such a position are undeniable. The privilege of mingling in daily and familiar intercourse with the most eminent men and women of the age, and of going at once to the fountain-head for every description of knowledge, is a proud and enviable one; and in labouring hard for it, Rogers is not to be confounded with the mere lover of titles and fine company for their own sake. A cursory reference to the obstacles he had to surmount at starting, will serve the double purpose of illustrating his character, and of claiming for him the credit which is his due for his subsequent exertions to level or lower the artificial barriers between the aristocracy of birth and rank and that of genius and intellect.

We learn from Moore that, when Sheridan came to Town with his first wife, it was a subject of anxious debate whether the son of a player could be received

at Devonshire House, although that player was by birth and education a gentleman. An excuse is suggested by Miss Berry when, referring to the society which she had seen as a girl, she says:—"Authors, actors, composers, singers, musicians, were all equally considered as profligate vagrants. Those whose good taste, or whose greater knowledge of the world, led them to make some exceptions, were implicated in the same moral category."* She adds in the next page:—"It was not till late in the reign of George III. that sculptors, architects, and painters (with the single exception of Sir J. Reynolds) were received and formed a chosen part of the best and most chosen society in London."

This statement is greatly over-coloured, particularly so far as authors are concerned; although the lives led by some of the most eminent (Fielding for example), and the early struggles of others (as depicted in Johnson's life of Savage), gave plausibility to the charge of profligacy and vagrancy. But it is an undoubted fact that successful authorship did not of itself constitute a recommendation to the best society till long after Rogers had aspired to become a leading member of it; and his first cautious advances were made rather in the character of a liberal host than of a popular poet.† The completion of his house in St. James's Place, in which he sought, not unsuccessfully, to carry out the views developed in his "Epistle to a Friend," was probably the commencement of his career as a Mæcenas, a diner-out and a dinner-giver

* England and France: a comparative View of the social Condition of both Countries. By the Editor of Madame du Deffand's Letters, vol. ii. p. 42. Allowances must be made for this lady's sympathy with Horace Walpole, who affected a contempt for professional authorship.

† See for example in Moore's Life of Byron, or Memoirs of Moore, vol. viii. p. 97, 98, the manner in which the reconciliation dinner for Moore and Byron was made up, Rogers not being then acquainted with the noble poet.

of the first water. Yet some of the most distinguished of his connexions were formed at an antecedent period; and one of his best stories was of a dinner given by him, when he occupied chambers in the Temple*, to Fox, Sheridan, Erskine, Perry (of the "Morning Chronicle"), and other Whig notables.

The dinner had been ordered from the Mitre Tavern, and was to arrive by instalments. The appointed hour was past, yet not a dish had made its appearance. "I quietly stole out," continued Rogers, "and hurried to the Mitre. 'What has become of my dinner?' I asked. 'Your dinner, sir,—your dinner is for to-morrow.' I stood aghast, and for a moment plans of suicidal desperation crossed my brain: when the tavern-keeper relieved me from my perplexity, by saying that he had so many dinners on hand, that mine, if ever ordered, had escaped his recollection altogether. 'Many dinners on hand, have you? then if you will send me the best dish from each of them, I will pay you double; and if you won't, you shall never see my face again.' As I was a good customer, he chose the more prudent and profitable alternative; and after an hour's waiting my guests were seated and served. 'And how did the dinner go off?' 'Oh, very well: they got a bad dinner, *but they got a good story to tell against me.*'" The conclusion was characteristic; for he himself would at any time have been consoled for a bad dinner by a good story against the host or the company.

There is another remarkable entry in Byron's Diary for Nov. 22, 1813:—

"Rogers is silent,—and, it is said, severe. When he does talk, he talks well; and, on all subjects of taste, his delicacy of expression is pure as his poetry. If you enter his house—

* His chambers were in Paper Buildings, and had been occupied by Lord Ellenborough. A new range has since been erected on the site.

his drawing-room—his library—you of yourself say, this is not the dwelling of a common mind. There is not a gem, a coin, a book thrown aside on his chimney-piece, his sofa, his table, that does not bespeak an almost fastidious elegance in the possessor. *But this very delicacy must be the misery of his existence. Oh, the jarrings his disposition must have encountered through life!*"

This leads us to the consideration of a well-known peculiarity in his mental construction, or acquired habits, which, strange to say, no one would so much as guess from the "Table Talk,"—namely, his mode of looking at, or placing, everything and everybody in the most disadvantageous point of view. Franklin, in his autobiography, mentions a gentleman who, having one handsome and one shrivelled leg, was wont to test the disposition of a new acquaintance by observing whether he or she looked first or most at the best or worst leg. Rogers would have forfeited all chance of this gentleman's esteem at starting. Yet there was something irresistibly comic, rather than annoying or repulsive, in the pertinacity and ingenuity with which he indulged his caustic humour. We will give a few instances; but the look the manner, the tone of voice, and the precise emphasis laid on particular words, cannot be transferred to paper. So uncertain is testimony, and so frail is memory, that even the accuracy of the expressions can rarely be guaranteed.

"Is that the contents you are looking at?" inquired an anxious author, who saw Rogers's eye fixed on a table or list at the commencement of a presentation copy of a new work. "No," said Rogers, pointing to the list of subscribers, "the *dis*contents."

Rogers, as may be believed, was one of the earliest of Landseer's innumerable admirers. He was known to have spoken highly of the picture of a Newfoundland dog, entitled "Portrait of a Distinguished Mem-

ber of the Royal Humane Society." On Landseer expressing his gratification, Rogers said: "Yes, I thought the ring of the dog's collar well painted."

He was returning from a dinner at —— House with a friend, who began expatiating on the perfection of the hospitality which they had just enjoyed. "Did you observe how he helped the fish?" said Rogers.

He had lent 800*l.* to Moore, and as the fact was gratefully bruited about at the time, and is duly recorded in the published Diary, there was and is no harm in Rogers's or our allusion to it. "When he repaid me the money," said Rogers, he exclaimed, 'There, thank God, I do not now owe a farthing in the world.' If he had been a prudent man he would have reflected that he had not got a farthing."

On entering Moore's parlour at Sloperton, and seeing it hung round with engraved portraits of Lord Grey, Lord John Russell, Lord Lansdowne, &c., Rogers remarked, "So, I see you have all your *patrons* about you." "A good-natured man," characteristically observed Moore, when he told the story, "would have said *friends*."

When he was speaking of some one's marriage in his usual tone, he was reminded that the friends of the bridegroom were very much pleased at it. Rogers replied, "He's a fortunate man then, for his friends are pleased, and his enemies delighted."

Whenever a disagreeable man, or one whom he disliked, married a pretty woman, he would say, "Now we shall have our revenge of him."

He spoke to Mrs. H. one day of Lady —— with extreme admiration and apparent cordiality; he then left the room, and Mrs. H. remarked that she had never heard Rogers speak so well of any one before. The door opened, and Rogers thrust in his head with the words, "There are spots on the sun though."

When a late member for a western county and his wife were stopped by banditti in Italy, Rogers used to say, "The banditti wanted to carry off P—— into the mountains; but she flung her arms round his neck, and rather than take her with them, they let him go."

This kind of malice was a venial offence in comparison with the cross things which he sometimes addressed to people to their faces without the shadow of a provocation; and it is these which have given rise to so many animated controversies about his goodness of heart. The discussion is strikingly analogous, in one essential quality, to the tilting match touching the colour of a shield. He presented the white side of his disposition to those he liked, and the black side to those he disliked; both likings and dislikings being often based on no sounder principle than that which proved fatal to Dr. Fell. Hence the fervent abuse of one faction, and the equally fervent laudation of another. Only what his eulogists fail to see, or unfairly refuse to admit, is, that no extent of kindness or courtesy to an object of preference is an excuse for unkindness or discourtesy to an object of antipathy, to say nothing of the social offence of an annoying or rude remark in company. Good breeding requires delicacy of perception enough to know what is pleasing or displeasing to those with whom we mix, as well as good nature and good temper enough so to use our knowledge as never to cause an unpleasant feeling or even to revive a disagreeable association. Rogers was eminently gifted with the instinctive tact in question, but his use of it varied with his mood; and there were times when he was both wayward and exacting to an unjustifiable extent, — when all his gentler emotions were "like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh."

One of his female favourites had made a little

dinner for him, in which, she fondly hoped, all his tastes and fancies had been consulted. After a glance round the table, he remarked that the fish was out of season.

At a bachelor dinner where the attendance was scanty, he refused the two or three things that were offered him, till the solitary waiter had left the room. "Won't you eat anything, Mr. Rogers?" asked the host. "I will take some of that *pie*" (pointing to a *vol-au-vent*) "when there is anybody to give it to me."

He bitterly repented of these two *escapades*, when, shortly afterwards, he was left out of a succession of small dinners to punish him, and was told why by one of the presiding beauties. The redeeming feature was that when (as Mr. Jarndyce would say) the wind was in the east, he was no respecter of persons, and distributed raps on the knuckles without ceremony to all alike, to the strong and the weak, the big and the little, the rich and the poor, the proud and the humble. Indeed it is no more than justice to him to say, that he was commonly conciliated by humility, and was more especially irritated by self-confident people in high health and high spirits, who took their share of the conversation, and forcibly broke in upon the monopoly of attention which he claimed or expected. His sense of humour made Sydney Smith's fun irresistible, and it was his pride to have so distinguished a guest at his table; but there was no love lost between them, and Rogers was all the bitterer in their incidental passages of arms from the consciousness of being (in Spenserian phrase) overcrowed. Thus at a dinner at the late Lord S——'s, at which both were present, Sydney Smith, by way of falling in with the humour of the company,—mostly composed of Meltonians and patrons of the turf, offered a bet, and added, "If I lose, I will pay

at once in a cheque on Rogers, Toogood, and Company," which was then the name of the firm. "And it shall be paid," said Rogers, in his bitterest tone, "*every iota of it*," — alluding to Sydney Smith's supposed reply, much censured for its levity, on being asked whether he believed the whole of the Thirty-nine Articles. When Rogers told the story, he justified himself on the ground that Sydney Smith "meant to take advantage of their being in fine company to run him down as a tradesman." When Sydney Smith mentioned it, he declared that he had fallen into an involuntary error from not calculating on the depths of human weakness, and that the notion of giving offence never so much as crossed his mind.

It should be added that Rogers had a morbid aversion for what he called "dog and horse men." He had omitted to observe how completely the coarseness and ignorance which was supposed, or at least declared by novelists and dramatists, to mark the country gentlemen of his youth, have been rubbed off and refined away by increased facilities of intercourse and the resulting cultivation of all classes.

Although a little jealous of Luttrell's superior fashion (of which an instance is given in the "Table Talk," p. 233), Rogers's favourite amongst the wits and talkers in repute was the author of "Letters to Julia," and the most refined of their common contemporaries (admitting Sydney Smith's far larger grasp and higher vocation) will approve the selection. There could not be a more agreeable companion than Luttrell, — so light in hand, so graceful in manner, so conciliating in tone and gesture, with such a range of well-chosen topics, and such a fresh, sparkling, and abundant spring of fancy to play upon them. When his poem (nicknamed "Letters from a Dandy to a Dolly") was published, a crack critic

began a review of it by suggesting that the author had, as it were, cut up his gold-egg-laying goose by printing his entire stock in trade as a joker. Never critic made a greater mistake. Luttrell's sources of agreeability were inexhaustible, and they were without alloy. To him belong some of the best *mots* recorded in "Moore's Diary;" and Rogers accurately described his peculiar manner when he said, "Luttrell is indeed a pleasant companion. None of the talkers whom I meet in London society can slide in a brilliant thing with such readiness as he does."

Rogers treated Moore much as Johnson treated Goldsmith,—rated him soundly when present for not attending better to his own interests, and did not always spare him when absent, but would suffer no one else to utter a word against him. In allusion to his restlessness, Rogers used to say, "Moore dines in one place, wishing he was dining in another place, with an opera-ticket in his pocket which makes him wish he was dining nowhere." Moore's "Diary." abounds with practical proofs of Rogers's unceasing liberality and unobtrusive charity. It also contains one valuable testimony of a rarer kind:—

"Rogers stayed more than a week [at Bowood, Dec. 1841]. Still fresh in all his faculties, and improved wonderfully in the only point where he ever was deficient, temper. He now gives the natural sweetness of his disposition fair play."

It appears from one of Moore's letters to Lady Donegal, published in his "Memoirs," that he had suffered severely at a preceding period from Rogers's carping humour and fault-finding propensity,—

"Rogers and I had a very pleasant tour of it, though I felt throughout it all, as I always feel with him, that the fear of losing his good opinion almost embitters the possession of it, and that, though in his society one walks upon roses, it is

with constant apprehension of the thorns that are among them. . . . He has left me rather out of conceit with my poem, 'Lalla Rookh' (as his fastidious criticism generally does), and I have returned to it with rather an humbled spirit; but I have already altered my whole plan to please him, and I will do so no more, for I should make as long a voyage of it as his own 'Columbus,' if I attended to all his objections. His general opinion, however, is very flattering: he only finds fault with every part of it in detail; and this, you know, is the style of his criticism of characters;—an excellent person, but—," (Aug. 21, 1812; vol. viii. p. 114.)

"Your description of Rogers," replies Lady Donegal, "is too like him. How vexatious it is that a man who has so much the power of pleasing and attaching people to him should mar the gifts of nature so entirely by giving way to that sickly and discontented turn of mind which makes him dissatisfied with everything, and disappointed in all his views of life. Yet he can feel for others; and notwithstanding this unfortunate habit he has given himself of dwelling upon the faults and follies of his friends, he really can feel attachment; and to you, I am certain, he is attached, though I acknowledge that the thorn sometimes makes one wish to throw away the roses, and forego the pleasure to avoid the pain. But with all his faults I like him, though I know he spares me no more than any of his other dear friends."—Aug. 28, 1812; vol. viii. p. 118.

Rogers was unceasingly at war with the late Lady D. One day at dinner she called across the table: "Now, Mr. Rogers, I am sure you are talking about me" (not attacking, as the current version runs). "Lady D.," was the retort, "I pass my life in defending you."

Although fashion is tolerably discriminating upon the whole, and commonly exacts an entrance-fee in sterling or current coin of some sort (either merit or celebrity) from all who are not born and bred within her hallowed precincts, still individuals may now and then be seen there whose position is as puzzling as that of Pope's fly in amber:—

"The thing we know is neither rich nor rare,
But wonder how the devil it got there."

For this anomalous species, Rogers professed unmitigated contempt; and their usual resource, industrious flattery, was worse than wasted on him. One evening when, leaning on the arm of a friend, he was about to walk home from an evening party, a pretentious gentleman of this description made a desperate attempt to fasten on them, and prefaced the meditated intrusion by saying that he never liked walking alone. "I should have thought, sir," said Rogers, "that no one was so well satisfied with your company as yourself."

If he had done no more than check pushing presumption, or expose fawning insignificance, his habitual severity of comment would have caused no reflection on his memory; but it became so formidable at one time, that his guests might be seen manœuvring which should leave the room last, so as not to undergo the apprehended ordeal; and it was said of him, with more wit than truth, that he made his way in the world, as Hannibal made *his* across the Alps, with vinegar. His adoption of a practice at variance with all his avowed theories has been accounted for by the weakness of his voice, which, it was argued, induced him to compel attention by bitterness,—like the backbiters described by Lord Brougham, "who, devoid of force to wield the sword, snatch the dagger, and steep it in venom to make it fester in the scratch." This solution is unjust to Rogers, who was not driven to procure listeners by such means. It, moreover, exaggerates a failing which was common to the wits of his earlier days, both in France and England. Three fourths of the good things attributed to Voltaire, Beaumarchais, Chesterfield, Selwyn, Sheridan, Walpole, Wilkes and their contemporaries, would have found appropriate place in

the "School for Scandal;" and before condemning Rogers on the evidence of those to whom the black side of his character was most frequently presented, we must hear those whose attention was constantly attracted to the white side.

One female reminiscent, nurtured and domesticated with genius from her childhood, writes thus: —

"I knew the kind old man for five and twenty years. I say kind advisedly, because no one did so many kind things to those who, being unable to dig, to beg are ashamed. The sharp sayings were remembered and repeated because they were so clever. There are many as bitter, no one so clever. He was essentially a gentleman, by education, by association,— his manners were perfect. Once, when breakfasting with him, upon taking our seats he called my daughter to his side, thus obliging a young man to leave his place; feeling that this was not courteous, he said, 'I ask you to move because I love your parents so dearly that I feel as if you were my son.'

"He not only gave freely and generously, but looked out for occasions of being kind. My father once saw him, and he asked after a mutual acquaintance — 'How is K——?' the reply was — 'As well as a man with nine children and a small income can be;' the next day Mr. Rogers sent him fifty pounds. A friend once asked him to assist a young man at college; he gave immediately twenty pounds, and after leaving the house returned to say, 'There is more money to be had from the same place, if wanted!' We ought to observe how much all that appears from time to time tells to his credit in the various Memoirs, &c. You find him always a peacemaker, always giving wise counsel, generous and kind."—*Private MS.*

The author of "The Winter's Walk," after alluding to "the keen point of many a famed reply," proceeds: —

"But by a holier light thy angel reads
The unseen records of more gentle deeds,—
And by a holier light thy angel sees
The tear oft shed for humble miseries,

Th' indulgent hour of kindness stol'n away
From the free leisure of thy well-spent day,
For some poor struggling son of Genius, bent
Under the weight of heartsick discontent

. . . . . .

And by that light's soft radiance I review
Thy unpretending kindness, calm and true,
Not to me only, but in bitterest hours
To one whom Heaven endowed with varied powers.

. . . . . .

By sorrow weakened, by disease unnerved,
Faithful at least the friend he had *not served*:
For the same voice essayed that hour to cheer
Which now sounds welcome to his grandchild's ear;
And the same hand, to aid that life's decline,
Whose gentle clasp so late was linked in mine."

Few readers can require to be reminded of the closing scenes in the "Life of Sheridan," when Rogers advanced 150*l.* (not the first of the same amount, says the biographer) to procure the expiring orator the poor privilege of dying undisturbed.

"Oh, it sickens the heart to see bosoms so hollow,
And friendships so cold, in the great and highborn;
To think what a long list of titles may follow
The relics of him who died friendless and lorn.
How proud they can flock to the funeral array
Of one whom they shunned in his sickness and sorrow,
How bailiffs may seize *his* last blanket to-day
Whose pall shall be held up by nobles to-morrow."

But it cheers the heart to see one neither great nor highborn stepping forward to prevent that last blanket from being seized; and, "in the train of all this phalanx of Dukes, Marquises, Earls, Viscounts, Barons, Honourables, Right Honourables, Princes of the Blood, and First Officers of the State, it was not a little interesting to see walking humbly, side by side, the only two men who had not waited for the call of vanity to display itself,—Dr. Bain and Mr. Rogers."*

When some one complained in Thomas Campbell's hearing, that Rogers said spiteful things: "Borrow

* Moore's "Life of Sheridan."

five hundred pounds of him," was the comment, "and he will never say one word against you until you want to repay him." He told a lady (the reminiscent before quoted) that Campbell borrowed 500*l.*, upon the plea that if he had that sum, it would do him a good service.* Three weeks afterwards he brought back the money, saying that he found it would not be prudent to risk it. "At this time," added Rogers, "I knew that he was every day pressed for small sums."

Here is an exemplarily kind action followed up by unexceptionably kind words. We could fill pages with other well-authenticated instances of his considerate generosity. They have come to light gradually; and it is a remarkable fact that, whilst he was annually giving away large sums, his name figured little in subscription lists. He may (as we have heard objected) have been acting all along rather from calculation than from impulsiveness, from head not heart. He may have been following Paley's counsel, who recommends us to cultivate our better feelings by almsgiving, if only with a view to our own self-complacency. Or he may have been simply more fortunate in his experimental benevolence than the nobleman who, on being advised to try doing a little good by way of a new pleasure, replied that he had tried it already and found no pleasure in it. To what does this analysis of motive *à la Rochefoucauld* amount after all? Surely, to seek and find happiness in doing good, is to be good. Admitting that the mere voluptuary, and the general benefactor, have each the same end, self,—still the difference in the means employed constitutes a sufficiently wide and marked distinction between the two. When we have calmly computed how much good might be done daily, how much happiness diffused, without the sacrifice of

* This is the loan mentioned in Moore's "Memoirs," vol. vii.

a wish or caprice, without the interruption of a habit, by thousands of the richer classes who never turn aside to aid the needy or elevate the lowly,—when we have done this, we shall then be in a fitting frame of mind for estimating the superiority of a man who had arrived at just conclusions regarding the real uses of wealth, and acted on them.

"Sir," said Adams, "my definition of charity is, a generous disposition to relieve the distressed." "There is something in that definition," answered Mr. Peter Pounce, "which I like well enough; it is, as you say, a disposition, and does not so much consist in the act as in the disposition to do it." There are plenty of Peter Pounces in our society. What we want are the Allworthys, or the worldly philosophers, on whose tombstones may be read without provoking a smile of irony: "What I spent, I had; what I gave, I have; what I saved, I lost." We commend this epitaph to the attention of the *millionaire* who has been accused of wishing to invest the accumulations of more than half a century in one big bank-note and carry it out of the world with him. When (see "Table Talk," p. 51) Lord Erskine heard that somebody had died worth 200,000*l.*, he observed, "Well, that's a very pretty sum to begin the next world with." Rogers had reserved for the *next* world just one eighth of that sum, exclusive of the contents of his house,—not enough, had his income from the Bank failed, to enable him to enjoy the comforts which age, infirmity, and confirmed habits had made necessary to him in *this*.

He bore the robbery of his Bank, which might have led to very serious consequences, with great equanimity, and said it had done him good,—by the chastening effect of adversity, and by bringing out the good qualities of his friends. It was after repeating Pope's line,—

"Bare the mean heart that beats beneath a star,"

that he one day mentioned, by way of qualification, the munificence and promptitude with which noble as well as simple had hurried to aid and sympathise with him. One peer is said to have placed 100,000*l.* at his disposal.

The best accessible specimens of his epistolary style will be found in the eighth volume of "Moore's Memoirs," edited by Lord John Russell, who says, that Rogers himself selected those of his letters which were to be published. They are evidently written with the scrupulous care which marks everything he undertook; and we will answer for it that his love-letters, should they ever come to light, will bear internal evidence of having been composed on a diametrically opposite principle to that recommended by Rousseau, who says that the writer should begin without knowing what he is going to say and end without knowing what he has said. Three or four of Rogers's letters relate to "Columbus." He writes to consult Moore as to which of sundry very ordinary verses is the best, telling him, on one occasion, that half of a particular line has received the sanction of Sharp and Mackintosh, and anxiously requiring to be informed if he agreed with them.

One of the most pleasing of these compositions is that (p. 95) in which he gives an account of the family of a brother who had retired from the Bank with an ample fortune, and was really living the life of rural enjoyment which the poet affected to think the acme of felicity. In another (p. 79) he avows a confirmed dislike to letter-writing. The notes which he wrote in the common commerce of the world are models of conciseness and calligraphy. If ever hand-writing corresponded with and betrayed character, it was his;—neat, clear, and yet not devoid of elegance. "Will you breakfast with me to-morrow? S. R.," was his pithy invitation to a celebrated wit and beauty. "Won't I? H. D.," was the congenial response.

There is no good likeness of him. The fact is, he would never allow one to be taken. He preferred that by Lawrence, because it was the most flattering. There is one designed and drawn on stone by an amateur artist (Lady Morgan's niece, Mrs. Geale) in 1838, which would have been excellent, had she ventured to give him his actual age at the time. Dantan's caricature bust is hardly a caricature, and for that very reason he held it in horror. One day Moore was indiscreet or malicious enough to say that a fresh stock had been sent over, and that he had seen one in a shop window. "It is pleasant news," said Rogers; "and pleasant to be told of it by a friend."

The accident which deprived him of the power of locomotion was the severest of trials to a man of his active habits and still extraordinary strength; for he delighted in walking, and thought his health depended upon the exercise he took in this way. Not long before, he had boasted of having had a breakfast party at home,—then gone to a wedding breakfast, where he returned thanks for the bridesmaids,—then to Chiswick, where he was presented to an imperial highness,—dined out,—gone to the Opera,—looked in at a ball, and walked home,—all within the compass of fourteen hours. "When I first saw him after his fall," writes the lady already quoted, "I found him lying on his bed, which was drawn near the bed-room window, that he might look upon the Park. Taking my hand, he kissed it, and I felt a tear drop on it, and that was all the complaint or regret that he ever expressed. Never did he allude to it to me, nor, I believe, to any one."

One day, between six and seven, when he was just going to dinner, hearing a knock at the door, he desired his faithful and attached servant, Edmund, to say, not at home. "Who was it?" he inquired. *E.* "Colonel ——, sir." *R.* "And who is Colonel ——?" *E.* "The gentleman who upset you, sir, and caused

your accident." *R.* "It is an agreeable recollection, did he come to refresh it?" *E.* "Oh, sir, he calls very often to inquire for you." *R.* "Does he? then, if he calls again, don't let him in, *and don't tell me of it.*" The gallant officer was (at worst) the innocent cause of the mishap; for as his brougham was passing at an ordinary pace, Rogers, who was about to cross, suddenly checked himself, lost his balance, and fell with his hip against the kerb-stone.

He used to say that he had never enjoyed two consecutive days' good health till he was past fifty; and he rather coveted than avoided allusions to his age. On one occasion, in his eighty-eighth year, he was accidentally left alone in the dark with a lady, who pretended to think her reputation in danger. "Ah, my dear, if sweet seventy-eight would come again! *mais ces beaux jours sont passés.*"

He told gracefully, with his usual deliberate simplicity and studied artlessness, a little incident of the same period. "They were playing at forfeits. Miss S. had to pay a kiss. 'Oh, it was to my uncle; so I paid it gladly.' 'Suppose it had been to me?' 'I should have paid it *cheerfully*.' Was not that a bitter-and-sweet adverb?"

When some one was speaking of a fine old man before Swift, he exclaimed, in a spirit of melancholy foreboding, "There's no such thing as a fine old man; if either his head or his heart had been worth anything, they would have worn him out long ago." Till near ninety, Rogers was a striking exception to this rule. He then gradually dropped into that state, mental and bodily, which raises a reasonable doubt whether prolonged life be a blessing or a curse—

> "Omni
> Membrorum damno major dementia, quæ nec
> Nomina servorum, nec vultus agnoscit amicûm,
> Cum queis præteritâ cœnavit nocte, nec illos
> Quos genuit, quos eduxit."

Although his impressions of long past events were as fresh as ever, he forgot the names of his relations and oldest friends whilst they were sitting with him, and told the same stories to the same people two or three times over in the same interview. But there were frequent glimpses of intellect in all its original brightness, of tenderness, of refinement, and of grace. "Once driving out with him," says a female correspondent, "I asked him after a lady whom he could not recollect. He pulled the check-string, and appealed to his servant. 'Do I know Lady M——?' The reply was, 'Yes, sir.' This was a painful moment to us both. Taking my hand, he said, 'Never mind, my dear, I am not yet reduced to stop the carriage and ask if I know *you*.'"

To another female friend, who was driving out with him shortly after, he said, "Whenever you are angry with one you love, think that that dear one might die that moment. Your anger will vanish at once."

During the last four or five years he was constantly expatiating on the advantages of marriage. "It was a proud, a blessed privilege," he would repeat, "to be the means, under Providence, of clothing an immortal soul in clay." He introduced and pursued this theme without respect to persons, and not unfrequently recommended matrimony to married people who would have lent a readier ear to a proposal of separation or divorce. In explanation of the rumours circulated from time to time in his younger days respecting his own attempts to confirm precept by example, he said, "that whenever his name had been coupled with that of a single lady, he had thought it his duty to give out that he had been refused." On his regretting that he had not married, because then he should have had a nice woman to care for him, it was suggested,—"How do you know she would not

have cared for somebody else?"—an awkward doubt at all times.

His own version of his nearest approximation to the nuptial tie was, that, when a young man, he admired and sedulously sought the society of the most beautiful girl he then, and still, thought he had ever seen. At the end of the London season, at a ball, she said: "I go to-morrow to Worthing. Are you coming there?" He did not go. Some months afterwards, being at Ranelagh, he saw the attention of every one drawn towards a large party, in the centre of which was a lady on the arm of her husband. Stepping forward to see this wonderful beauty, he found it was his love. She merely said: "You never came to Worthing."

He latterly took great delight in hearing the Bible read, especially passages of the sublimest poetry, and those of exquisite moral beauty. This kind office was frequently performed for him by a lady as much distinguished by her private virtues as formerly by qualities which enchanted the public. In the course of religious conversation arising out of her readings, she suggested to him the subject of the Sacrament. After due consideration, he expressed himself desirous of receiving it from his old friend, the Dean of St. Paul's. The Dean, after some conference with him, consented to his request, and accordingly administered the sacramental rite to Rogers, his sister (then, like her brother, in a state of great bodily infirmity), the lady above alluded to, her daughter, and one other person for whom he expressed very sincere affection.

In the case of most men over whom the grave had closed so recently, we should have refrained from such minuteness of personal detail, however curious or illustrative. But the veil had been removed from the private life of Rogers long before we approached the sanctuary; and we are not responsible for the

profanation, if it be on His habits, his mode of life, his predilections, his aversions, his caustic sayings, his benevolent actions, have been treated like common property as far back as the living generation can remember. They have been discussed in all circles, and have occasionally appeared (with varying degrees of accuracy) in print. Now that monarchs have left off changing their shirts at crowded *levées*, we should be puzzled to name any contemporary celebrity who, whether he liked it or not, had been so much or so constantly before the public as Rogers. He knew everybody, and everybody knew him. He spoke without reserve to the first comer, and the chance visitor was admitted to his intimacy as unwarily as the tried friend. This argued a rare degree of conscious rectitude and honourable self-reliance; and in estimating his character, in balancing the final account of his merits and demerits, too much stress cannot be laid on the searching nature of the ordeal he has undergone. Choose out the wisest, brightest, noblest of mankind, and how many of them could bear to be thus pursued into the little corners of their lives?—"all their faults observed, set in a note-book, learned and conned by rote?" Most assuredly, if the general scope and tendency of their conduct be no worse, they may, one and all,—to borrow the impressive language of Erskine,—"walk through the shadow of death, with all their faults about them, with as much cheerfulness as in the common path of life." But if great virtues may not atone for small frailties, or kind deeds for unkind words, "they must call upon the mountains to cover them, for which of them can present, for Omniscient examination, a pure, unspotted, and faultless course?"

JAMES SMITH.

(From the Law Magazine, February, 1840.)

The members who do most honour to the legal profession are not those who make its distinctions and emoluments their sole object,— for they often cut a sorry figure beyond its sphere,— but those who combine with the diligent and conscientious discharge of its duties a fair proportion of the acquirements or qualities which are appreciated in society. Amongst the most remarkable of such men was the late James Smith, and we feel it a duty to record the few particulars we have been able to collect concerning him.

He was the son of an eminent solicitor, and born in London, February 16th, 1775. In January, 1785, he was placed at school with the Rev. Mr. Burford, at Chigwell, in Essex, which he left in June, 1789, for the New College at Hackney, where he remained one year. His education was completed under Mr. Wanostrocht, at Alfred House, Camberwell. He was articled to his father in 1792, and in due time taken into partnership. He was also appointed joint-solicitor to the Ordnance Board, and succeeded to the sole appointment on his father's death in 1832.

We rather think, from his description, that his father was a practitioner of the old school, not very tolerant of digressions from the beaten track, and likely enough to regard either or both of his distinguished sons as —

> "Some youth his parents' wishes doomed to cross,
> Who pens a stanza when he should engross."

But the old gentleman had sufficient respect for

literature to point out Dr. Johnson to his son James, who, though he could not have been more than eight years old at the time, retained a vivid recollection of the circumstance — *Virgilium tantum vidi.*

To the best of our information, James's *coup d'essai* in literature was a hoax in the shape of a series of letters to the editor of the "Gentleman's Magazine," detailing some extraordinary antiquarian discoveries and facts in natural history, which the worthy Sylvanus Urban inserted without the least suspicion; and we understand that the members of the Antiquarian and Zoological Societies are still occasionally in the habit of appealing to them in corroboration of their theories. In 1803, he became a constant contributor to the "Pic-Nic" and "Cabinet" weekly journals, in conjunction with Mr. Cumberland, Sir James Bland Burgess, Mr. Horatio Smith, and others. The founder of these publications was Colonel Greville, a man of family, fashion, and cultivated taste, on whom Lord Byron has conferred a not very enviable immortality —

> "Or hail at once the patron and the pile
> Of vice and folly, Greville and Argyle."

One of James Smith's favourite anecdotes related to him. The Colonel requested his young ally to call at his lodgings, and in the course of their first interview related the particulars of the most curious circumstance in his life. He was taken prisoner during the American war, along with three other officers of the same rank: one evening they were summoned into the presence of Washington, who announced to them that the conduct of their government, in condemning one of his officers to death as a rebel, compelled him to make reprisals, and that much to his regret he was under the necessity of requiring them to cast lots without delay to decide which of them

should be hanged. They were then bowed out, and returned to their quarters. Four slips of paper were put into a hat, and the shortest was drawn by Captain Asgill, who exclaimed, "I knew how it would be; I never won so much as a hit at backgammon in my life." As Greville told the story, he was selected to sit up with Captain Asgill, under the pretext of companionship, but in reality to prevent him from escaping, and leaving the honour amongst the remaining three. "And what," inquired Smith, "did you say to comfort him?" "Why I remember saying to him when they left us, '*Hang it, old fellow, never mind;*'" but it may be doubted (added Smith) whether he drew much comfort from the exhortation. Lady Asgill persuaded the French minister to interpose, and the captain was permitted to escape.

Both James and Horatio were also contributors to the "Monthly Mirror," then the property of Mr. Thomas Hill, a gentleman who had the good fortune to live familiarly with three or four generations of authors; the same, in short, with whom the subject of this memoir thus playfully remonstrated: "Hill, you take an unfair advantage of an accident; the register of your birth was burnt in the great fire of London, and you now give yourself out for younger than you are." Their "Imitations of Horace" (afterwards reprinted in a separate volume) originally appeared in Hill's miscellany.

The fame of the brothers was confined to a limited circle until the publication of "The Rejected Addresses," which rose at once into almost unprecedented celebrity, and still keeps its place amongst the best of the *jeux d'esprit* which have outlived the occasions which gave rise to them,—as the "Rolliad," "Anticipation," the choice papers of the "Antijacobin," and the "New Whig Guide."

It is a well-known fact in literary history that many

of the most popular productions failed at first to attract the confidence or excite the cupidity of "the trade." "Pelham" was on the point of being returned upon the writer's hands, when Mr. Colburn chanced to glance over a few pages of the manuscript, and with instinctive sagacity divined the value of the prize. "The Rejected Addresses" (as the preface to the nineteenth edition informs us) had been rejected over and over again in the literal acceptation of the term, when Mr. Miller offered to undertake the risk of publication, and share the profits, *if any* — laying (as James Smith used to say) a peculiar stress upon the *if*. At the appearance of the third or fourth edition, they sold their share to the same publisher for one thousand pounds, the "Imitations of Horace" being thrown into the bargain: for these, though clever, can hardly be said to have enjoyed an independent reputation or done more than follow in the wake.

Lord Byron, in allusion to the rapid success of "Childe Harold," says, "I awoke and found myself famous;" (which, by the way, a witty runaway wife parodied by saying, "I awoke and found myself infamous.") The authors of "The Rejected Addresses" might have said the same. Within a week, reviews and newspapers of all shades and complexions were praising their production, or speculating on their identity; and the moment they threw off the mask, their acquaintance was eagerly courted by the notabilities of the day. Amongst others, the Dowager Countess of Cork — the first English woman of rank who threw open her house to literature, or made intellectual distinction a recognised passport to society — was anxious to have them at her soirées, and commissioned one of the established lions to bring them. Whether the commission was awkwardly executed, or their pride took alarm too readily, or the occasion for a joke was too tempting to be lost, it is currently

reported that an answer to the following purport was returned: —

"My dear ——, — Pray make our best excuses to your noble and hospitable friend, and say we regret extremely that it will not be in our power to accept the flattering invitation so obligingly communicated through you, for my brother is engaged to grin through a horse-collar at a country fair, and I myself to dance a hornpipe at Sadler's Wells upon that night.

"Very truly yours,

"J. SMITH." *

Many of the very writers who were parodied hastened to bear testimony to the accuracy of the imitations, and joined heartily in the laugh.

Lord Byron wrote from Italy to Mr. Murray, — "Tell him we forgive him, were he twenty times our satirist."

"I certainly must have written this myself," said Sir Walter Scott, pointing to the description of the fire, "although I forget upon what occasion."

Crabbe, on being introduced to James Smith at Mr. Spencer's villa at Richmond, seized both his hands, and exclaimed with a loud laugh, "Ah! my old enemy, how do you do?"

The introduction to Mr. Spencer himself is thus described in the preface already mentioned: —

"Lydia White, a literary lady, who was prone to feed the lions of the day, invited one of us to dinner; but, recollecting afterwards that William Spencer formed one of the party, wrote to the latter to put him off; telling him that a man was to be at her table whom he 'would not like to meet.' 'Pray who is this whom I should not like to meet,' inquired the poet. 'O!' answered the lady, 'one of those men who have made that shameful attack upon you!' 'The very man upon earth I should like to know!' rejoined the lively and careless bard. The two individuals accordingly met, and have continued fast friends ever since."

* Mr. H. Smith tells us that the letter was never sent.

Still Mr. Spencer did not above half like it. "It's all very well for once," he subsequently remarked, "but don't do it again. I had been almost forgotten when you revived me; and now all the newspapers and reviews ring with 'this fashionable trashy author.'"

Fitzgerald, one of those most broadly burlesqued *, met James Smith at an anniversary dinner of the Literary Fund: —

Fitzgerald (with good humour).—"Mr. Smith, I mean to recite after dinner."

Mr. Smith.—"Do you?"

Fitzgerald. — "Yes; you'll have more of 'God bless the Regent and the Duke of York.'"

Monk Lewis became the friend of the authors, but never could be got to admit the truth of the imitation in his own case. "Many of them," was his remark to Lady Holland, "are very fair, but mine is not at all like; they have made me write burlesque, which I never do." "You don't know your own talent," was the consolatory reply.

On the whole, the only discontented persons were the poets who were left out.

James Smith used to dwell with much pleasure on the criticism of a Leicestershire clergyman: "I do not see why they should have been rejected: I think some of them very good." This, he would add, is almost as good as the avowal of the Irish bishop, that there were some things in "Gulliver's Travels" which he could not believe.

We have often heard him asked whether he could identify his own share of the composition, but he

* He must have got used to it: —

"—— Let hoarse Fitzgerald bawl
His creaking couplets in a tavern hall."
English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.

generally evaded the inquiry by declaring the publication to be strictly joint,—*à-propos* of which he gave us Sheridan's account of his own and his first wife's labours on their first arrival in town: "We composed together, and our labours might well be called *joint*, for we had no chance of a joint till they were completed." Every now and then, however, he would allude to particular passages as his own, and, by Mr. Horatio Smith's kindness, we are now enabled to give the long desiderated information regarding the authorship.

The notion was first started by a gentleman connected with the theatres (not the actor) named Ward, christened Portsoken Ward by H. Smith, from his fondness for port. They took different authors, wrote their papers apart, and then submitted them to each other; but the subsequent alterations seldom exceeded verbal improvements or the addition of a few lines.

By JAMES SMITH.

2. The Baby's Début. By W. W. (Wordsworth.)

5. Hampshire Farmer's Address. By W. C. (Cobbett.)

7. The Rebuilding. By W. S. (Southey.)

13. Playhouse Musings. By S. T. C. (Coleridge.)

14. Drury Lane Hustings: A New Halfpenny Ballad. By a Pic-Nic Poet (a quiz on what are called humorous songs).

16. Theatrical Alarm Bell. By the editor of the M. P. ("Morning Post.")

17. The Theatre. By the Rev. G. C. (Crabbe.)

18, 19, 20. Macbeth; George Barnwell; and the Stranger, Travesties.

By HORATIO SMITH.

1. Loyal Effusions. By W. T. F. (Fitzgerald.)

3. An Address without a Phœnix. By S. T. P. (this was a real address sent in by the writer).

4. Cui Bono? By Lord B. (Byron) — except the first stanza, which was written by James.

6. The Living Lustres. By T. M. (Moore.)

8. Drury's Dirge. By L. M. (Laura Matilda.)

9. A Tale of Drury Lane. By W. S. (Scott.)

10. Johnson's Ghost.

11. The Beautiful Incendiary. By the Hon. W. S. (Spencer.)

12. Fire and Ale. By M. G. L. (Lewis.)

15. Architectural Atoms. By Dr. B. (Busby.)

21. Punch's Apotheosis. By T. H.

A note to the last article runs thus:—

"Theodore Hook, at that time a very young man, and the companion of the author in many wild frolics. The cleverness of his subsequent prose compositions has cast his early stage songs into oblivion. This parody was, in the second edition, transferred from Colman to Hook."

It was so transferred, because Colman was exceedingly annoyed, and Hook, it is well known, would laugh at it. We cannot discover the slightest resemblance to either.

The numbers in the lists correspond with those in the table of contents of the last and best edition, published by Mr. Murray in 1839.* The preface was written by Horatio, and the notes by James.

"To one of us," it is stated in the preface, "the totally unexpected success of this little work proved an important event, since it mainly decided him some years afterwards to embark in that literary career which the continued favour of the novel-reading public has rendered both pleasant and profitable to him." Mr. Horatio Smith, the author of "Brambletye House," "Zillah," and other popular works of fiction, is

* Mr. Murray gave 131*l.* for the copyright in 1819, after the 16th edition. He has since published three editions, and sold nearly four thousand copies.

the member of the brotherhood who speaks here. James, though he felt proud of his brother's increasing reputation*, doggedly adhered to his favourite maxim, that when a man has once made a good hit, he should rest upon it,—a maxim which he was wont to strengthen by Bishop Warburton's authority. When Anstey, the author of the "Bath Guide," was presented to the veteran, he said, "Young man, I will give you a piece of advice: you have written a highly successful work—never put pen to paper again."

At the same time he was obliged to own that a man's reputation might require an occasional burnishing, and would humorously illustrate the limited and ephemeral nature of fame by an incident that once happened to himself in a Brighton coach. An old lady, struck by his extraordinary familiarity with things and people, at length burst forth,—"And pray, sir, you who seem to know everybody—pray, may I ask who you are?" "James Smith, ma'am." This evidently conveyed nothing to her mind, and a fellow-passenger added, "One of the authors of 'Rejected Addresses.'" The old lady stared at them by turns, and then ejaculated, "I never heard of the gentleman or the book before."

He considered it no breach of his maxim to contribute occasionally to the lighter periodical publications, or to assist his friend Mathews in the concoction of his entertainments. Most of the best songs of the great comédian were from his pen.† Brevity, however, whatever it may be with others, was certainly the soul of wit with him; and the only article of any length we remember from his pen—a critique of some cookery books, written for a review started on

* He used to say to Horatio: "I am often complimented on your writings, but people don't like to be contradicted, and so I let it pass."

† See Mrs. Mathews's "Life of Mathews" on this subject.

a new plan by Mr. Cumberland—was a comparative failure, notwithstanding the obvious fitness of the subject for pleasantry.

He was also frequently applied to by dramatic writers for a comic song, a hit at the follies of the day, or other assistance of the kind, which was always readily afforded, and generally proved eminently useful to the piece. The interest thus taken in theatrical matters naturally led to his being made free of the green-room; and he used to relate an incident curiously illustrative of the morals of the stage twenty or thirty years ago. An actress of note one night addressed him thus: "Mr. Smith, you are constantly here, but you do not appear to attach yourself to any of our ladies." "Ah, madam," was the reply, "that proves my discretion; you little know what is going on in private between me and some of you."

From the commencement of the "New Monthly Magazine," in 1821, he was a frequent contributor. His "Grimm's Ghost" in particular attracted much attention; and a collection of his papers, under the title of "East and West," was once advertised by Mr. Colburn, though the intention was subsequently abandoned.

His social qualities were those which will live the longest in the recollection of his friends; for he was one of the pleasantest companions imaginable, and it was difficult to pass an evening in his company without feeling in better humour with the world; such was the influence of his inexhaustible funds of amusement and information, his lightness, liveliness, and good sense. He was not very witty or brilliant, nor even very ready at repartee. Indeed we are pretty sure that most of the best things recorded of him were *impromptus faits à loisir;* but no man ever excelled him in starting pleasant topics of conversa-

tion, and sustaining it; nor was it well possible for a party of moderate dimensions, when he was of it, to be dull. The droll anecdote, the apt illustration, the shrewd remark, — a trait of humour from Fielding, a scrap of a song from the "Beggars' Opera," a knock-down retort of Johnson's, a couplet from Pope or Dryden, — all seemed to come as they were wanted, and, as he was always just as ready to listen as to talk, acted each in turn as a sort of challenge to the company to bring forth their budgets and contribute towards the feast. As Scott says of Rashleigh Osbaldistone, "he was never loud, never overbearing, never so much occupied with his own thoughts as to outrun either the patience or the comprehension of those he conversed with. His ideas succeeded each other with the gentle but unintermitting flow of a plentiful and bounteous spring, whilst others who aim at distinction in conversation, rush along like the turbid gush from the sluice of a millpond, as hurried and as easily exhausted."

His gentleman-like manners and fine person — set off by strict attention to his dress — added not a little to the effect; and as he disliked argument, and never lost his temper or willingly gave offence, it would have been no easy matter for others to lose theirs or offend him. His memory was prodigious, but it was principally stored with the choicest morsels from the standard English poets, comic writers, and dramatists (which formed his favourite reading), and like Mackintosh, as described by Mr. Sydney Smith, he so managed it as to make it a source of pleasure and instruction rather than "that dreadful engine of colloquial oppression into which it is sometimes erected." Of late years he was occasionally accused of repeating his favourite stories and epigrams too often, but they were generally new to some persons in the company, and most of them were of such a nature as a cultivated

mind always recurs to with delight — *decies repetita placebunt.* He had a good ear for music, and voice enough to sing his own songs with full effect.

We need hardly state that, long after the first flush of his celebrity, he was a welcome guest in the best houses, town and country. Latterly, however, he seldom left town except on occasional visits to Mr. H. Smith, at Brighton; Mr. Croker, at Moulsey; and Lord Abinger, at Abinger Hall. Though never guilty of intemperance, he was a martyr to the gout; and independently of the difficulty he experienced in locomotion, he partook largely of the feeling avowed by his old friend Jekyll, who used to say that, if compelled to live in the country, he would have the drive before his house paved like the streets of London, and hire a hackney coach to drive up and down all day long.

He used to tell with great glee a story showing the general conviction of his dislike to ruralities. He was sitting in the library at a country-house, when a gentleman proposed a quiet stroll into the pleasure grounds:

"Stroll! why, don't you see my gouty shoe?"

"Yes, I see that plain enough, and I wish I'd brought one too; but they're all out now."

"Well, and what then?"

"What then? Why, my dear fellow, you don't mean to say that you have really got the gout? I thought you had only put on that shoe to get off being shown over the improvements."

In town, one of the houses at which he visited most was Lord Harrington's. He was a nice observer of manners; and the perfect high-breeding which characterises every member of the Stanhope family, without exception, was exactly to his taste.

Another of his favourite houses was Lady Blessington's. He admired her powers of conversation;

he loved to mingle amongst social, literary, and political celebrities; and he thought Count D'Orsay one of the most accomplished and agreeable men he had ever known. At Lady Blessington's request he frequently contributed to the "Book of Beauty;" for example, the verses on Mrs. Lane Fox, and Mrs. Verschoyle. He was also in the habit of sending her occasional epigrams, complimentary scraps of verse, or punning notes, like the following:—

"The newspapers tell us that your new carriage is very highly varnished. This, I presume, means your wheeled carriage. The merit of your personal carriage has always been to my mind its absence from all varnish. The question requires that a jury should be im*pannelled*."

Or this:—

"Dear Lady Blessington,—When you next see your American friend, have the goodness to accost him as follows:

"In England rivers all are males—
For instance Father Thames;
Whoever in Columbia sails,
Finds them ma'mselles or dames.

"Yes, there the softer sex presides,
Aquatic I assure ye,
And Mrs. Sippy rolls her tides,
Responsive to Miss Souri.

"Your ladyship's faithful and
"Devoted servant,
"JAMES SMITH."

His bachelorship is thus attested in his niece's album:—

"Should I seek Hymen's tie,
As a poet I die:
Ye Benedicts mourn my distresses!
For what little fame
Is annexed to my name,
Is derived from 'Rejected Addresses.'"

His solitary state, however, certainly proceeded rather from too discursive than too limited an admi-

ration of the sex, for to the latest hour of his life he gave a marked preference to their society, and disliked a dinner party composed exclusively of males.

The two following are amongst the best of his good things. A gentleman with the same Christian and surname took lodgings in the same house. The consequence was, eternal confusion of calls and letters. Indeed the postman had no alternative but to share the letters equally between the two. "This is intolerable, sir," said our friend, "and you must quit." "Why am I to quit more than you?" "Because you are James the Second — and must *abdicate*."

Mr. Bentley proposed to establish a periodical publication, to be called "The Wit's Miscellany." Smith objected that the title promised too much. Shortly afterwards the publisher came to tell him that he had profited by the hint, and resolved on calling it "Bentley's Miscellany." "Isn't that going a little too far the other way," was the remark.

A capital pun has been very generally attributed to him. An actor named Priest was playing at one of the principal theatres. Some one remarked at the Garrick Club that there were a great many men in the pit. "Probably clerks who have taken Priest's orders." The pun is perfect, but the real proprietor is Mr. Poole, one of the best punsters as well as one of the cleverest comic writers of the day.

In a letter dated May 21, 1836 (since printed), he wrote to a lady friend: —

"Our dinner party yesterday, at H——'s chambers in the Temple, was very lively. Mrs. —— was dressed in pink, with a black lace veil; her hair smooth, with a knot behind, and a string of small pearls across her forehead. Hook was the lion of the dinner-table, whereupon I, like Addison, did 'maintain my dignity by a stiff silence.' An opportunity for a *bon-mot*, however, occurred, which I had not virtue sufficient to resist. Lord L—— mentioned that an old lady, an ac-

quaintance of his, kept her books in detached book-cases, the male authors in one, and the female in another. I said, 'I suppose her reason was, she did not wish to add to her library.'"

The joke was made by Lord L——; the story, an invented pleasantry, illustrative of Madame Genlis's prudery, having been related by another of the company.

He had an unfeigned respect for his profession, and would often regret the manner in which it was losing its individual character by becoming blended with the world. He would fain have brought back the times when it was as much a matter of course for a judge to reside in Bloomsbury as for a barrister to have chambers in an inn of court, and we have heard him frequently state that, when Lord Ellenborough set the present fashion by moving to St. James's Square, the circumstance gave general dissatisfaction, and was a prominent topic in the newspapers for a week.

In those days, it was customary on emergencies for the judges to swear affidavits at their dwelling-houses. Smith was desired by his father to attend a judge's chambers for that purpose, but being engaged to dine in Russell Square at the next house to Mr. Justice Holroyd's, he thought he might as well save himself the disagreeable necessity of leaving the party at eight, by despatching his business at once: so a few minutes before six he boldly knocked at the judge's, and requested to speak to him on particular business. The judge was at dinner, but came down without delay, swore the affidavit, and then gravely asked what was the pressing necessity that induced our friend to disturb him at that hour. As Smith told the story, he raked his invention for a lie, but finding none fit for the purpose, he blurted out the truth:—

"'The fact is, my lord, I am engaged to dine at the next house — and — and —'

"'And, sir, you thought you might as well save your own dinner by spoiling mine?'

"'Exactly so, my lord, but —'

"'Sir, I wish you a good evening.'"

Though he brazened the matter out, he said he never was more frightened; for he had a prescriptive reverence for legal dignitaries, and we doubt whether an invitation from one of the Royal Family would have given him more gratification than an invitation from a judge. We well remember the pleasure with which he dwelt upon a dinner at Baron Gurney's, where he met Lord Denman; and his attachment to Lord Abinger was based full as much on that distinguished person's unrivalled forensic reputation, as on his general acquirements, literary taste, polished manners, and sociability.

He was rather fond of a joke on his own branch of the profession; he always gave a peculiar emphasis to the line in his song on the contradictions in names,—

"Mr. Makepeace was bred an attorney,"

and would frequently quote Goldsmith's lines on Hickey, the associate of Burke and other distinguished contemporaries:—

"He cherished his friends, and he relished a bumper;
Yet one fault he had, and that was a thumper.
Then, what was his failing? come, tell it, and burn ye:
He was, could he help it? a special attorney."

The following playful colloquy in verse took place at a dinner-table between Sir George Ross and himself, in allusion to Craven Street, Strand, where he resided:—

"*J. S.*—'At the top of my street the attorneys abound,
And down at the bottom the barges are found:

Fly, Honesty, fly to some safer retreat,
For there's craft in the river, and craft in the street.'

"*Sir G. R.*—'Why should Honesty fly to some safer retreat,
From attorneys and barges, 'od rot 'em?
For the lawyers are *just* at the top of the street,
And the barges are *just* at the bottom.'"

He had a proper, unaffected, philosophical respect for rank; but he had formed too true and precise an estimate of his own position to be ever otherwise than at his ease, and no one knew better that the great charm of society is the entire absence of pretension and subserviency,—the thorough, practical, operating conviction in the minds of all present that they are placed for the time on a perfect footing of equality.

He had a keen relish for life, but he spoke calmly and indifferently about dying — as in the verses on revisiting Chigwell: —

"I fear not, Fate, thy pendent shears:
There are who pray for length of years,
To them, not me, allot 'em —
Life's cup is nectar at the brink,
Midway, a palatable drink,
And wormwood at the bottom."

This is not quite reconcileable with a remark he once made to the writer, that if he could go back to any former period of his life, he would prefer going back to forty. He was about that age when he first sprang into celebrity.

On the occasion of another visit to Chigwell he wrote thus: —

"World, in thy ever busy mart,
I've acted no unnoticed part—
Would I resume it?— Oh, no —
Four acts are done — the jest grows stale,
The waning lamps burn dim and pale,
And reason asks — *cui bono.*"

On giving up the solicitorship to the Ordnance, he found that his income would not suffice for his

habitual wants, and he invested his moneyed capital (about 3000*l.*) in an annuity. "It looks selfish," he remarked, "as regards my brother's children; but please to observe, that when my brother married, he cut me off from all chance of inheriting from him; and although my life is not worth many years' purchase, it may last twenty years, and I should be made miserable by the possibility of ever coming to want." He did not live long enough to receive more than the first quarter of the annuity.

We are informed by his friend and physician, Dr. Paris, by whose skill and attention his life was more than once unexpectedly prolonged, that he did not suffer much during his last illness. He died on the 24th December, 1839, and was buried in the vaults under St. Martin's Church. The funeral, by his own desire, was strictly private.

GEORGE SELWYN.

(From the Edinburgh Review, July, 1844.)

George Selwyn and his Contemporaries; with Memoirs and Notes. By John Heneage Jesse. 4 vols. London: 1843–4.

There is a charm in the bare title of this book. It is an *open sesame* to a world of pleasant things. As at the ringing of the manager's bell, the curtain rises, and discovers a brilliant *tableau* of wits, beauties, statesmen, and men of pleasure about town, attired in the quaint costume of our great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers; or, better still, we feel as if we had obtained the reverse of Bentham's wish — to live a part of his life at the end of the *next* hundred years, — by being permitted to live a part of ours about the beginning of the *last*, with an advantage he never stipulated for, that of spending it with the pleasantest people of the day.

Let us suppose that only twenty-four hours were granted us; how much might be done or seen within the time! We take the privilege of long intimacy to drop in upon Selwyn in Chesterfield Street, about half-past ten or eleven in the morning; we find him in his dressing-gown, playing with his dog Raton: about twelve we walk down arm-in-arm to White's, where Selwyn's arrival is hailed with a joyous laugh, and Topham Beauclerk hastens to initiate us into the newest bit of scandal. The day is warm, and a stroll to Betty's fruit-shop (St. James's Street) is proposed. Lord March is already there, settling his famous bet with young Mr. Pigot, that old Mr. Pigot would die

before Sir William Codrington. Just as this grave affair is settled, a cry is raised of "the Gunnings are coming," and we all tumble out to gaze and criticise. At Brookes's, our next house of call, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams is easily persuaded to entertain the party by reading his verses, not yet printed, on the marriage of Mr. Hussey (an Irish gentleman) with the Duchess of Manchester (the best match in the kingdom), and is made happy by our compliments; but looks rather blank on Rigby's hinting that the author will be obliged to fight half the Irishmen in town, which, considering the turn of the verses, seemed probable enough. To change at once the subject and the scene, we accompany Sir Charles and Rigby to the House of Commons, where we find "the Great Commoner" making a furious attack on the Attorney-General (Murray), who (as Walpole phrases it) suffered for an hour. After hearing an animated reply from Fox (the first Lord Holland) we rouse Selwyn, who is dozing behind the Treasury Bench, and, wishing to look in upon the Lords, make him introduce us below the bar. We find Lord Chesterfield speaking, the Chancellor (Hardwicke) expected to speak next, the Duke of Cumberland just come in, and the Duke of Newcastle shuffling about in a ludicrous state of perturbation, betokening a crisis; but Selwyn grows impatient, and we hurry off to Strawberry Hill, to join the rest of the celebrated *partie quarrée*, or "out of town" party, who are long ago assembled. The *petit souper* appears on the instant, and as the champagne circulates, there circulates along with it a refined, fastidious, fashionable, anecdotic, gossiping kind of pleasantry, as exhilarating as its sparkle, and as volatile as its froth. We return too late to see Garrick, but time enough for the house-warming fête at Chesterfield house, where the Duke of Hamilton loses a thousand pounds at faro, because he

chooses to ogle Elizabeth Gunning instead of attending to his cards.

We shall, perhaps, be reminded that (making light of an anachronism or two) we have seen nothing of Fielding, Richardson, Smollett, Johnson, Collins, Akenside, Mason, or Gray; but our gay friends, alas! never once alluded to them, and for *us* to waste any part of so short a period in looking for men of letters, would be to act like the debtor in the Queen's Bench Prison, who, when he got a day rule, invariably spent it in the Fleet.

According to Mr. Jesse, we owe this new glimpse into these times to a habit of Selwyn's, which it is difficult to reconcile with his general carelessness. "It seems to have been one of his peculiarities to preserve not only every letter addressed to him during the course of his long life, but also the most trifling notes and unimportant memoranda." Such was the practice of the most celebrated wit of the eighteenth century; the most celebrated wit of the nineteenth did precisely the reverse. "Upon principle," (said Sydney Smith, in answer to an application about letters from Sir James Mackintosh,) "I keep no letters, except those on business. I have not a single letter from him, nor from any human being, in my possession."* We should certainly prefer being our contemporary's correspondent; but we must confess that we are not sorry to come in for a share of the benefits accruing from Selwyn's savings to his posterity. With the help of the materials thus supplied, or collected by Mr. Jesse, we will endeavour, before tapping (to borrow Walpole's word) the

* Life of Mackintosh, by his Son, vol. ii. p. 99.—"We talked of letter-writing. 'It is now,' said Johnson, 'become so much the fashion to publish letters, that, in order to avoid it, I put as little into mine as I can.' 'Do what you will, sir,' replied Boswell, 'you cannot avoid it.'"—*Boswell's Life of Johnson*, vol. viii. p. 80.

chapter of Selwyn's correspondence, to sketch an outline of his life.

George Augustus Selwyn entered the world with every advantage of birth and connexion; to which that of fortune was added in good time. His father, Colonel John Selwyn, of Matson in Gloucestershire, where the family ranked as one of the best in the county, had been aide-de-camp to the Duke of Marlborough, commanded a regiment, sat many years in Parliament, and filled various situations about the court. His mother, a daughter of General Farrington, was woman of the bedchamber to Queen Caroline, and enjoyed a high reputation for social humour. As his father was a plain, straightforward, commonplace sort of man, it is fair to presume that he inherited his peculiar talent from her; thus adding another to the many instances of gifted men formed by mothers, or endowed by them with the best and brightest of their qualities. Schiller, Goethe, the Schlegels, Victor Hugo, Canning, Lord Brougham, occur to us on the instant; and Curran said—"The only inheritance I could boast of from my poor father, was the very scanty one of an unattractive face and person, like his own; and if the world has ever attributed to me something more valuable than face or person, or than earthly wealth, it was that another and a dearer parent gave her child a fortune from the treasure of her mind."

Selwyn was born on the 11th August, 1719. He was educated at Eton, and on leaving it entered at Hertford College, Oxford. After a short stay at the university, he started on the grand tour, and on his return, though a second son with an elder brother living, made London and Paris his head-quarters, became a member of the clubs, and associated with the wits and men of fashion. Before he had completed his twenty-first year, he was appointed Clerk of the

Irons and Surveyor of the Meltings at the Mint; offices usually performed by deputy. At all events, occasional attendance at the weekly dinner, formerly provided for this department of the public service, was the only duty they imposed on Selwyn; the very man to act on Colonel Hanger's principle, who, when a friend in power suggested that a particular office, not being a sinecure, would hardly suit him, replied, "Get me the place, and leave me alone for making it a sinecure." The salary must have been small, for in a letter from Paris (September, 1742), he says that his entire income, including the allowance made him by his father, was only 220*l.* a year; and he appears to have been constantly in distress for money. In a letter to his former Eton tutor, Mr. Vincent Mathias (Paris, November, 1742), he entreats his advice as to the best mode of getting the Colonel to advance a small sum over and above his yearly income; and gives a pitiable description of his circumstances, "without clothes, linen, books, or credit."

In 1744, Selwyn returned to Hertford College, and resumed the life of a college student;—unaccountably enough, for he was then a formed man of the world, and twenty-five. Probably he had thoughts of pursuing a profession, or, to please his father, pretended that he had. His influential position in the London world at this time, is shown by letters from Rigby and Sir Charles Hanbury Williams.

"*The Right Hon. Richard Rigby to George Selwyn.*

"Tuesday, March 12 (1745), 7 o'clock.

"Dear George,—I thank you for your letter, which I have this moment received and read; and, that you may not be surprised at my readiness in answering it, I will begin with telling you the occasion of it. *I am just got home from a cock-match,* where I have won forty pounds in ready money, and, not having dined, am waiting till I hear the

rattle of the coaches from the House of Commons, in order to dine at White's; and now I will begin my journal, for in that style I believe my letters will be the best received, considering our situations. . . .

"I saw Garrick act Othello that same night, in which I think he was very unmeaningly dressed, and succeeded in no degree of comparison with Quin, except in the scene where Iago gives him the first suspicion of Desdemona. He endeavoured throughout to play and speak everything directly different from Quin, and failed, I think, in most of his alterations."

This was the occasion on which Quin went to the pit to see his rival act. It was at a time when Hogarth's "Marriage à la Mode" was familiar to every one. One of the prints of that series represents a negro boy bringing in the tea-things. When Garrick, with his diminutive figure and blackened face, came forward as Othello, Quin exclaimed, "Here is Pompey, but where is the tray?" The effect was electrical, and Garrick never attempted Othello again. When Dr. Griffiths, many years afterwards, thoughtlessly inquired whether he had ever acted the part? "Sir," said he, evidently disconcerted, "I once acted it to my cost."

Sir Charles writes—

"I hope you divert yourself well at the expense of the whole university, though the object is not worthy you. The dullest fellow in it has parts enough to ridicule it, and you have parts to fly at nobler game."

By disregarding this sensible hint, Selwyn got into a scrape, which, had it happened in our time, would have fixed a lasting stigma on his character. In 1745, he so far forgot himself, in a drunken frolic, as to go through a profane mockery of a religious ceremony; and the circumstance having come to the knowledge of the heads of the university, he was

expelled. Most of his gay friends looked on this affair in the same light as Sir William Maynard, who writes thus: —

"Walthamstow, July 3, 1745.

"Dear George,—I have this moment received yours, and have only time to tell you the sooner you come here, the greater the obligation will be to me. *D—n the university! —I wish they were both on fire, and one could hear the proctors cry like roasted lobsters.* My compliments to Dr. Newton.

"Yours affectionately,

"W. M."

Indeed the only palliation or apology, and that a poor one, that can be urged for Selwyn, is to be found in the bad taste and loose habits of his contemporaries. The famous Medenham Abbey Club was founded soon afterwards. It consisted of twelve members, who met at Medenham Abbey, near Marlow, to indulge in ribaldry, profanity, and licentiousness. The motto (from Rabelais) over the grand entrance was: *Fay ce que voudrais.* Although the club became notorious, and their disgusting profanity was well known, it proved no bar either to the reception of the members in society, or to their advancement in the state. Sir Francis Dashwood, the founder, who officiated as high priest, became Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty; and Wilkes everything that the sober citizens of London could make of him.

Selwyn's character at this time is given by one of the Oxford magnates: —"The upper part of the society here, with whom he often converses, have, and always have had, a very good opinion of him. He is certainly not intemperate nor dissolute, nor does he game, that I know or have heard of. He has a good deal of vanity, and loves to be admired and caressed, and so suits himself with great ease to the gravest and the sprightliest."

Colonel and Mrs. Selwyn were shocked and irritated in the highest degree by such a termination of his university career; but the failing health of his elder brother John contributed to soften them, and procured George an extent of indulgence which would hardly have been granted, had it not become apparent that the family estate and honours must eventually devolve upon him. John Selwyn was the intimate friend of Marshal Conway, to whom, so early as 1740, Walpole writes: "I did not hurry myself to answer your last, but chose to write to poor Selwyn upon his illness. He deserves so much love from all that know him, and you owe him so much friendship, that I can scarce conceive a greater shock." John did not die till June, 1751, when George was in his thirty-second year. By this event he became the heir, but the estate was unentailed, and his prospects were still dubious enough to excite the apprehensions of his friends. In November, 1751, Sir William Maynard writes—

"The public papers inform me of your father's being dangerously ill, which was confirmed to me last post. As you have always convinced me of your love for your father, (though I can't persuade the world you will be sorry for his death,) I shall be glad to know, if you have one moment's leisure, how he does, as you are so nearly concerned in his doing well. I can't help thinking but it will be more for your interest that your father should recover, as I don't yet imagine you *quite* established in his good opinion, and as you have so powerful an enemy at home."

Who his powerful enemy at home was, does not appear. His mother is mentioned in a preceding letter as his advocate; yet one of Walpole's anecdotes implies that at one time he had forfeited the affection of both parents. The notorious Lady Townshend had taken an extraordinary fancy to the rebel Lord

Kilmarnock, whom she had never seen until the day of his trial. "George Selwyn dined with her, and not thinking her affliction so serious as she pretends, talked rather jokingly of the execution. She burst into a flood of tears and rage, *told him she now believed all his father and mother had said of him*, and, with a thousand other reproaches, flung up-stairs. George coolly took Mrs. Dorcas, her woman, and made her sit down to finish the bottle. 'And pray, sir,' says Dorcas, 'do you think my lady will be prevailed upon to let me go and see the execution? I have a friend that has promised to take care of me, and I can lie in the Tower the night before.'"

His father died in 1751 without tying up the property, which brought with it the power of nominating two members for Ludgershall, and interest enough at Gloucester to insure his own return for that city. This change of circumstances made little change in his course of life. He had sat in Parliament for the family borough since 1747, when Gilly Williams writes:—"I congratulate you on the near approach of Parliament, and figure you to myself before a glass at your rehearsals. I must intimate to you not to forget closing your periods with a significant stroke of the breast, and recommend Mr. Barry as a pattern, who I think pathetically excels in that beauty." Spranger Barry, the actor, is the proposed model; but Selwyn was not ambitious of senatorial honours, and when obliged to attend the House and be in readiness for a division, he used either to withdraw to one of the committee-rooms for conversation, or to fall asleep. He generally sided with the court party, and was well rewarded for his constancy; being at the same time Clerk of the Irons and Surveyor of the Meltings at the Mint, Registrar of the Court of Chancery in Barbadoes (where he had an estate), and Paymaster of the Works—de-

scribed as a very lucrative appointment. It was abolished in 1782, by Burke's Economical Reform Bill; but in the course of the next year he was made Surveyor-General of the Works by Mr. Pitt.

In 1768 he was opposed at Gloucester by a timber-merchant, and the manner in which his friends speak of his opponent is characteristic of the times. Gilly Williams calls him "a d—d carpenter;" and Lord Carlisle asks—

"Why did you not set his timber yard a-fire? What can a man mean who has not an idea separated from the foot square of a Norway deal plank, by desiring to be in Parliament? Perhaps, if you could have got anybody to have asked him his reasons for such an unnatural attempt, the fact of his being unable to answer what he had never thought about might have made him desist. But these beasts are monstrously obstinate, and about as well bred as the great dogs they keep in their yards."

It is currently related that Selwyn did his best to keep Sheridan out of Brookes's, and was only prevented from black-balling him for the third or fourth time by a trick. According to one version, the Prince of Wales kept Selwyn in conversation at the door till the ballot was over. According to Wraxall's, he was suddenly called away by a pretended message from his adopted daughter. Some attribute his dislike to aristocratic prejudice; others to party feeling; and Mr. Jesse says that it arose in a great degree from Sheridan's "having been one of the party which had deprived Selwyn of a lucrative post"—that of Paymaster of the Works. Yet Mr. Jesse himself states that the black-balling occurred in 1780, and that the place was abolished in 1782. We are uncharitable enough to think that an established wit would feel something like an established beauty at the proposed

introduction of a rival, and that a tinge of jealousy might have been the foundation of the dislike.

Selwyn had taken to gaming before his father's death—probably from his first introduction to the clubs. In 1748, Gilly Williams asks—"What do you intend? I think the almanack bids you take care of colds, and abstain from physic; I say, avoid the knowing ones, and abstain from hazard." His stakes were high, though not extravagantly so, compared with the sums hazarded by his contemporaries. In 1765, he lost a thousand pounds to Mr. Shafto, who applies for it in the language of an embarrassed tradesman—

"July 1, 1765.

"Dear Sir,—I have this moment received the favour of your letter. I intended to have gone out of town on Thursday, but as you shall not receive your money before the end of this week, I must postpone my journey till Sunday. A month would have made no difference to me, had I not had others to pay before I leave town, and must pay: therefore must beg that you will leave the whole before the week is out at White's, as it is to be paid away to others to whom I have lost, and do not choose to leave town till that is done. Be sure you could not wish an indulgence I should not be happy to grant, if in my power."

Mr. Jesse states that latterly Selwyn entirely got the better of his propensity to play; observing that it was too great a consumer of four things,—time, health, fortune, and thinking. But an extract from the late Mr. Wilberforce's Diary throws some doubt on the accuracy of this statement: "The first time I was at Brookes's, scarcely knowing any one, I joined, from mere shyness, at the faro-table, where George Selwyn kept bank. A friend who knew my inexperience, and regarded me as a victim decked out for sacrifice, called out to me, 'What, Wilberforce! is that you?' Selwyn quite resented this interference,

and turning to him said, in his most impressive tone, 'Oh, sir! don't interrupt Mr. Wilberforce, he could not be better employed.'" This occurred in 1782, when Selwyn was sixty-three. Previously, in 1776, we find him undergoing the process of dunning from Lord Derby; and in 1779 from Mr. Crawford,—"Fish Crawford," as he was called,—each of whom, like Mr. Shafto, "had a sum to make up."

Gaming was his only vice. He indulged moderately in the pleasures of the table. In 1765 Williams writes, "You may eat boiled chicken and kiss Raton (his dog) as well on this side the water." As regards gallantry, we have good authority for doubting whether he was quite so much an anchorite as was supposed; but his coldness was a constant subject of banter among his friends. Lord Holland says—"My Lady Mary goes (to a masquerade) dressed like Zara, and I wish you to attend her dressed like a black eunuch." Lord Carlisle adopts the same tone—"In regard to her (a mysterious unknown), in every other light but as a friend you shall see I shall be as cold as a stone, or as yourself." Readers of the "Rolliad" may recall a broader joke; and Mr. Jesse has ventured to print one of Gilly Williams's, levelled at Walpole as well as Selwyn, which we cannot venture to transcribe. As to Selwyn's alleged intrigue with the Marchesa Fagniani, there is no better proof of it than his extreme fondness for her daughter (Maria, Dowager-Marchioness of Hertford), whom the gossips thence inferred to be his own. In contemporary opinion, Lord March shared the honours of paternity with Selwyn. His Lordship was equally intimate with her mother, and he left her an immense fortune at his death. Resemblance, too, must go for something; and Dr. Warner, after an interview with Lord March, says—"The more I contemplate his face, the more I am

struck with a certain likeness to the lower part of it; his very chin and lips, and they are rather singular. But you will never be *d'accord* upon this interesting subject, as I am sorry to be too much convinced; but that you know better than I." In considering this question, it must not be forgotten that Selwyn's passion for children was one of the marked features of his character. Lord Carlisle's and Lord Coventry's, particularly Lady Anne Coventry (afterwards Lady Anne Foley), were among his especial favourites.

Selwyn paid frequent visits to Paris, and spoke French to perfection. "I shall let Lord Huntingdon know (says Lord March) that you are thought to have a better pronunciation than any one that ever came from this country." The Queen of Louis XV. took pleasure in conversing with him. "I dined today (we are still quoting from Lord March,) at what is called no dinner, at Madame de Coignie's. The Queen asked Madame de Mirepoix, '*Si elle n'avait pas beaucoup entendu médire de Monsieur Selwyn et elle?*' *Elle a repondu*, '*Oui, beaucoup, Madame.*' '*J'en suis bien-aise,*' *dit la Reine.*" He was received on a perfect footing of equality, and as it were naturalised, in that brilliant circle of which Madame du Deffand was the centre; and he often lingered longer in it than was agreeable to his English friends. "Lady Hertford (writes Lord March in 1766) made a thousand inquiries about you; asked how long you intended to stay, and hoped you would soon be tired of blind women, old Presidents, and Premiers,"—alluding to Madame du Deffand, the President Henault, and the Duc de Choiseul. Williams sarcastically inquires, "Cannot we get you an hospital in this island, where you can pass your evenings with some very sensible matrons? and, if they are not quite

blind, they may have some natural infirmity equivalent to it."

Nothing proves Selwyn's real superiority more strongly than his reception in this brilliant coterie, and the enjoyment he found in it; for when he began making his periodical visits to Paris, national prejudice was at its height;—the French regarded the English as barbarians, and the English entertained a contemptuous aversion for the French. So late as 1769, Lord Carlisle thus amusingly alludes to these vulgar errors:—

"I am very sorry to hear Mr. Wood's family were splashed by the sea. People who never travel know very little what dangers we run. I dare say most of your French acquaintances here wonder you do not go to England *by land*, but I believe they are very easy about us after we are gone. They think we are very little altered since the landing of Julius Cæsar; that we leave our clothes at Calais, having no further occasion for them, and that every one of us has a sunflower cut out and painted upon his ——, like the prints in Clarke's Cæsar. I do not think that all entertain this idea of us; I only mean the *sçavans;* those who can read."

The French might be pardoned for supposing that the English left their clothes at Calais, for the tailors of Paris were then as much in requisition as the milliners; and Selwyn is invariably loaded with commissions for velvet coats, silk small-clothes, brocade dressing-gowns, lace ruffles, and various other articles, by the gravest as well as the gayest of his friends. As for the notion of reaching England *by land*, geography and the use of the globes were rare accomplishments in both countries. When Whiston foretold the destruction of the world within three years, the Duchess of Bolton avowed an intention of escaping the common fate, by going to China. Selwyn not only overcame the national prejudice in his own indi-

vidual instance, but paved the way for the reception of his friends. It was he who made Horace Walpole acquainted with Madame du Deffand, and Gibbon with Madame de Geoffrin.

His habit of dozing in the House of Commons has been already noticed. He occasionally dozed in society. "We hear (says Williams) of your falling asleep standing at the old President's (Henault's), and knocking him and three more old women into the fire. Are these things true?" Walpole also hints at it. "When you have a quarter of an hour, *awake* and to spare, I wish you would bestow it on me." He is by no means singular, as might be shown by many remarkable instances besides that of Lord North, who (according to Gibbon) "might well indulge a short slumber on the Treasury bench, when supported by the majestic sense of Thurlow on the one side, and the skilful eloquence of Wedderburne on the other." Lord Byron, in one of his Journals, records a dinner-party of twelve, including Sheridan, Tierney, and Erskine, of whom five were fast asleep before the dessert was well upon the table. In another, he relates:—"At the Opposition meeting of the peers in 1812, at Lord Grenville's, where Lord Grey and he read to us the correspondence upon Moira's negotiation, I sat next to the present Duke of Grafton, and asked what is to be done next? '*Wake the Duke of Norfolk*' (who was snoring away near us), replied he; 'I don't think the negotiators have left any thing else for us to do this turn.'" Considering the hours kept by modern wits and senators, they may be excused for dropping into a pleasing state of forgetfulness occasionally; but Selwyn had no such excuse. His mode of life is exhibited in a droll sketch, in a letter to himself, written by Lord Carlisle at Spa, in 1768:—

"I rise at six; am on horseback till breakfast; play at cricket till dinner; and dance in the evening till I can scarce crawl to bed at eleven. There is a life for you! You get up at nine; play with Raton till twelve in your nightgown; then creep down to White's to abuse Fanshawe; are five hours at table; sleep till you can escape your supper reckoning; then make two wretches carry you, with three pints of claret in you, three miles for a shilling."

Wits are seldom given to ruralities. In the spirit of Captain Morris's song, they are ready to give up any amount of green trees or mountain breezes for "the sweet shady side of Pall Mall." Selwyn partook largely of this feeling. The state of a gentleman's cellar was then, whatever it may be now, a fair indication of the use he made of his house, and Matson was very slenderly stocked. When Gilly Williams took up his quarters there in passing through Gloucester, he writes—"I asked Bell to dine here, but he is too weak to venture so far; so the Methodist and I will taste your new and old claret. I have been down in the cellar: there are about nine bottles of old, and five dozen of new." Yet Matson was a highly agreeable residence, charmingly situated, and rich in historical associations. Charles II. and James II. (both boys at the time) were quartered there during the siege of Gloucester by the Royalists in 1643; and they amused themselves by cutting out their names, with various irregular emblazonments, on the window-shutters.

During one of his brief electioneering visits at Matson, Selwyn took it into his head to perform justiceship; for (as Fielding observes with reference to a similar attempt on the part of Squire Western) it was, indeed, a syllable more than justice. "What the devil (exclaims Gilly Williams) could tempt you to act as justice of the peace? This is Trapolin with a vengeance! What! evidence, party, and judge

too! If you do not make it up with the man soon, some rogue of an attorney will plague your heart out in the King's Bench." His gardener had been guilty of some peculation, for which Selwyn, without ceremony, committed him.

A little over-eagerness might be excused, as one of his strongest peculiarities was a passion for the details of criminal justice, from the warrant to the rope. His friends made a point of gratifying it, by sending the earliest intelligence of remarkable crimes, criminals, trials, and executions, as well as every anecdote they could collect concerning them. When Walpole's house in Arlington Street was broken open, his first care, after securing the robber, was to send for Selwyn:—"I despatched a courier to White's for George, who, you know, loves nothing upon earth so well as a criminal, except the execution of him. It happened very luckily that the Drawer, who received my message, has very lately been robbed himself, and had the wound fresh in his memory. He stalked up into the club-room, stopped short, and with a hollow trembling voice said, 'Mr. Selwyn, Mr. Walpole's compliments, and he's got a housebreaker for you.'"

Gilly Williams, having no house-breaker for him, sends him a story about one instead:—"I will give you a Newgate anecdote, which I had from a gentleman who called on P. Lewis the night before the execution, and heard one runner call to another and order a chicken boiled for Rice's supper; 'but,' says he, 'you need not be curious about the sauce, for he is to be hanged to-morrow.' 'That is true,' says the other; 'but the Ordinary sups with him, and you know he is a devil of a fellow for butter.' If the continental air has not altered you, this will please you; at least, I have known the time when you have gone a good way for such a morsel."

The best stories regarding his taste for executions are related by Walpole, and well-known. Innumerable were the jokes levelled at him for this peculiarity. The best is the first Lord Holland's, who was dying: —"The next time Mr. Selwyn calls show him up: If I am alive, I shall be delighted to see him; and if I am dead, he will be glad to see me." Lord Holland was not the only statesman of the period who could joke under such circumstances. Mr. Legge (the story is Gilly Williams's) told a very fat fellow who came to see him the day he died—"Sir, you are a great weight; but, let me tell you, you are in at the death." Another of the same gentleman's stories is probably meant as a warning—"I remember a man seeing a military execution in Hyde Park, and when it was over, he turned about and said, 'By G—, I thought there was more in it!' He shot himself the next morning."

The writer of a letter in the "Gentleman's Magazine," for April, 1791, supposed to be the Rev. Dr. Warner, makes a gallant effort to rescue Selwyn's memory from what he terms an unjust and injurious imputation. After urging that nothing could be more abhorrent from Selwyn's character, and that he had the most tender and benevolent of hearts, the writer thus proceeds:—"This idle but widespread idea of his being fond of executions (of which he never in his life attended but at one, and that rather accidentally from its lying in his way, than from design) arose from the pleasantries which it pleased Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, and the then Lord Chesterfield, to propagate from that one attendance, for the amusement of their common friends. Of the easiness with which such things sat upon him, you may judge from the following circumstance, which I have heard him more than once relate. Sir Charles was telling a large company a similar story to that

of his attending upon executions, with many strokes of rich humour, received with great glee, before his face, when a gentleman who sat next to the object of their mirth, said to him in a low voice—'It is strange, George, so intimate as we are, that I should never have heard of this story before.' 'Not at all strange,' he replied in the same voice, 'for Sir Charles has just invented it, and knows that I will not by contradiction spoil the pleasure of the company he is so highly entertaining.' And such was his good nature in everything." This may account for the pleasantries, but hardly for the facts, stated by Walpole and others; or for such an epistle as the following:—

"I can with great pleasure inform you, my dear Selwyn, that the head is ordered to be delivered on the first application made on your part. The expense is little more than a guinea; the person who calls should pay for it. Adieu, *mon cher mondain.*

"T. PHILLIPS."

As to tenderness and benevolence, there surely was no necessity for assuming, that the taste in question was irreconcilable with such qualities. It was simply a craving for strong excitement; a modification of the feeling which still induces the Spanish women to attend bull-fights, and formerly lured the gentlest and noblest of the sex to tournaments. Moreover, people were by no means so refined or squeamish in Selwyn's time as now, when the spectacle of bloody heads over Temple Bar would not be tolerated for an hour. Crowds of all classes pressed round to gaze on those of the rebel Lords in 1746; and telescopes were fixed for the use of the curious at a halfpenny a peep. "I remember" (says Johnson, as reported by Boswell) "once being with Goldsmith in Westminster Abbey. While we surveyed the Poets' Corner, I said to him,

"'Forsitan et nomen nostrum miscebitur istis.'

When we got to Temple Bar, he stopped me, pointed to the heads upon it, and slily whispered me,

"'Forsitan et nomen nostrum miscebitur *istis*.'"

Nay, not thirty years ago, it was customary for the governor of Newgate to give a breakfast to thirteen or fourteen persons of distinction on the morning of an execution. The party attended the hanging, breakfasted, and then attended the cutting-down, but few had any appetite for the second and third parts of the ceremonial. When we ourselves attended, a very pretty girl (the governor's daughter, we believe), who spoke of the sufferers as "*our people*," distributed the tea and coffee. She assured us, in confidence, that the first call of the incipient amateur was invariably for brandy; and that the only guest who never failed to do justice to the broiled kidneys (for which she was famous) was the Ordinary.

Storer (one of the Selwyn set) writes in 1774:— "You will get by your edition of Madame de Sévigné's Letters, enough to pay for as much *Vin de Grave* as ever she drank *en Bretagne*." Selwyn rivalled or outran Walpole in his admiration of Madame de Sévigné, and paid a visit to her residence, *Les Rochers* (graphically described, as at present existing, in Lady Morgan's "Book of the Boudoir"); but we find no other proof of direct literary intentions on his part; and there is consequently no ground for disputing the applicability of the remark with which Mr. Jesse introduces the topic of his wit:—

"Perhaps no individual has ever acquired so general a reputation for mere wit as George Selwyn. Villiers Duke of Buckingham, Lords Dorset, Rochester, Chesterfield, and Hervey, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, Bubb Doddington, Sheridan, and (perhaps the most brilliant luminary in this galaxy of wit) the late Theodore Hook, were men who had

one and all distinguished themselves in following the paths of literature, while more than one of them had rendered himself eminent in the senate. Thus, the character which each maintained for wit was supported by the adventitious aid of a reputation for literary or oratorical talents, while the fame of George Selwyn stands exclusively on his character for social pleasantry and conversational wit."

Not quite. It stood also on his three seats in Parliament, and on his family connexions. These, at the very outset, procured him that vantage ground to which Sheridan and Hook were obliged to win their way at the risk of fretting a thousand vanities. This may not apply to the rest on Mr. Jesse's list; but then it is a very imperfect one, and admits of large additions — as (omitting all living examples) Foote, Wilkes, Jekyll, Curran, Colman.

Dr. Johnson disliked Foote; but when one of the company, at a dinner-party at Dilly's, called him a merry-andrew, a buffoon, the sage at once declared that he had wit; and added — "The first time I was in company with Foote, was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased; and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on taking my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back on my chair, and fairly laugh it out. No, sir, he was irresistible." It was said to be impossible to take Foote unawares, or to put him out. As he was telling a story at a fine dinner-party, a gentleman, to try him, pulled him by the coat-tail, and told him that his handkerchief was hanging out. "Thank you, sir," said Foote, replacing it, "you know the company better than I do," and went on with his story.

Wilkes's fame may rest on his reply to Lord Sandwich, and on his fling at Thurlow. Jekyll needs no

trumpeter. Lord Byron says of Colman—"If I had to choose, and could not have both at a time, I would say, 'Let me begin the evening with Sheridan, and finish it with Colman.'" Of Curran, he says, "I have met him at Holland House; he beats every body—his imagination is beyond human, and his humour (it is difficult to define what is wit) perfect. Then he has fifty faces, and twice as many voices, when he mimics." This, we may add, was Hook's great charm. His best stories were dramatic representations *à la Mathews*, little inferior to that fine observer's "At Homes."

Why, again, since Mr. Jesse has gone back so far, did he not go back a little farther, and mention the old Earl of Norwich;—a singular illustration of the fickleness of taste, and the truth of the maxim—"a jest's prosperity lies in the ear of him who hears it." He was the acknowledged wit of Charles the First's court; but was voted a dead bore when he attempted to resume his wonted place at Whitehall after the Restoration.

It should be remembered, moreover, to be placed on the opposite column of the account—that high reputation in one line may sometimes prevent a man from acquiring much in another; not merely because of the prevalent dislike to pluralities, but because the less is merged in the greater. Thus it was admirably said of Sir James Mackintosh by Sydney Smith, "that he had not only humour, but wit also; at least, new and sudden relations of ideas flashed across his mind in reasoning, and produced the same effect as wit, *and would have been called wit, if a sense of their utility and importance had not often overpowered the admiration of novelty.*" Wilberforce speaking of Pitt, said—"He was the wittiest man I ever knew, and (what was quite peculiar to himself) had at all times his wit under entire control.

Others appeared struck by the unwonted association of brilliant images; but every possible combination of ideas seemed always present to his mind, and he could at once produce whatever he desired. I was one of those who met to spend an evening in memory of Shakspeare, at the Boar's Head, Eastcheap. Many professed wits were present, but Pitt was the most amusing of the party, and the readiest and most apt in the required allusions."

In addition to Selwyn's other places, the voice of his contemporaries conferred on him that of Receiver-General of Waif and Stray Jokes—a sufficient proof that he had plenty of his own; for as D'Alembert sarcastically observed to the Abbé Voisenon, who complained that he was unduly charged with the absurd sayings of others—"*Monsieur l'Abbé, on ne prête qu'aux riches.*" Selwyn's *droits*, in respect of his anomalous office, were not limited to the clubs. Lord Holland writes, in 1770,—"As the newspapers impute so much wit to you, I hope they give you the invention of that pretty motto they have put upon Lord Carlisle's cap." Lord Carlisle, in 1776,—"What the witty Mr. G. S. says in the newspapers is admirable about the red-hot poker, though I like *Diis placuit* better." Lord March, in 1767,—"The king talked of you at his dressing, and told me something that you had said of the Macaronis, that he thought very good."

According to Walpole, it was Selwyn's habit to turn up the whites of his eyes, and assume an expression of demureness when giving utterance to a droll thought; and Wraxall says, that the effect of his witticisms was greatly enhanced by his listless, drowsy manner. Nor is this all. What makes a man like Selwyn the delight of his contemporaries, is that versatility, richness, and elasticity of mind, which invests the commonest incidents with amusing or inspiriting

associations—lights intuitively on the most attractive topics, grasps them one moment, lets them go the next, and, in a word, never suffers companionship to become tiresome, or conversation to grow dull. He may do this without uttering any thing that will be generally recognised as wit.

At the risk of disappointing our readers, however, we shall here quote some of the best of Selwyn's recorded witticisms and pleasantries: they occupy little room, and there is nothing more provoking than to be told of "the well-known anecdote" which one does *not* know.

When a subscription was proposed for Fox, and some one was observing that it would require some delicacy, and was wondering how Fox would take it —"Take it? why, *quarterly*, to be sure."

When one of the Foley family crossed the Channel to avoid his creditors—"It is a *pass over* that will not be much relished by the Jews."

When Fox was boasting of having prevailed on the French court to give up the gum-trade—"As you have permitted the French to draw your *teeth*, they would be fools, indeed, to quarrel with you about your *gums*."

When Walpole, in allusion to the sameness of the system of politics continued in the reign of George the Third, observed—"But there is nothing new under the sun."—"No," said Selwyn, "nor under the *grandson*."

One night, at White's, observing the Postmaster-General, Sir Everard Fawkener, losing a large sum of money at piquet, Selwyn, pointing to the successful player, remarked—"See, how he is robbing the mail!"

On another occasion, in 1756, observing Mr. Ponsonby, the Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, tossing about bank-bills at a hazard-table at Newmarket—"Look how easily the Speaker passes the *money-bills*."

The beautiful Lady Coventry was exhibiting to him a splendid new dress, covered with large silver spangles the size of a shilling, and inquired of him whether he admired her taste—"Why," he said, "you will be *change for a guinea.*"

This bears a strong resemblance to one of Lord Mansfield's judicial pleasantries. Serjeant Davy was cross-examining a Jew at great length, in order to prove his insufficiency as bail. The sum was small, and the Jew was dressed in a suit of clothes bedizened with silver lace. Lord Mansfield at length interfered —"Come, come, brother Davy, don't you see the man would burn for the money?"

At the sale of the effects of the minister, Mr. Pelham, Selwyn, pointing to a silver dinner-service, observed—"Lord, how many toads have been eaten off these plates!"

A namesake of Charles Fox having been hung at Tyburn, Fox inquired of Selwyn whether he had attended the execution—"No, I make a point of never frequenting *rehearsals.*"

A fellow-passenger in a coach, imagining from his appearance that he was suffering from illness, kept wearying him with good-natured inquiries as to the state of his health. At length, to the repeated question of "How are you now, sir," Selwyn replied—"Very well, I thank you; and I mean to continue so for the rest of the journey."

He was one day walking with Lord Pembroke, when they were besieged by a number of young chimney-sweepers, who kept plaguing them for money. At length Selwyn made them a low bow: "I have often," he said, "heard of the sovereignty of the people; I suppose your Highnesses are in court mourning."

"On Sunday last," says Walpole, "George Selwyn was strolling home to dinner at half an hour after four. He saw my Lady Townshend's coach stop at

Caraccioli's chapel. He watched, saw her go in; her footman laughed; he followed. She went up to the altar, a woman brought her a cushion; she knelt, crossed herself, and prayed. He stole up, and knelt by her. Conceive her face, if you can, when she turned and found him close to her. In his demure voice, he said, 'Pray, madam, how long has your ladyship left the pale of our church?' She looked furious, and made no answer. Next day he went to her, and she turned it off upon curiosity; but is anything more natural? No, she certainly means to go armed with every viaticum; the Church of England in one hand, Methodism in the other, and the Host in her mouth."

Wraxall stands godfather to the next:—"The late Duke of Queensberry, who lived in the most intimate friendship with him, told me that Selwyn was present at a public dinner with the Mayor and Corporation of Gloucester, in the year 1758, when the intelligence arrived of our expedition having failed before Rochfort. The Mayor, turning to Selwyn—'You, sir,' said he, 'who are in the ministerial secrets, can, no doubt, inform us of the cause of this misfortune?' Selwyn, though utterly ignorant on the subject, yet unable to resist the occasion of amusing himself at the inquirer's expense—'I will tell you, in confidence, the reason, Mr. Mayor,' answered he; 'the fact is, that the scaling-ladders prepared for the occasion were found, on trial, to be too short.' This solution, which suggested itself to him at the moment, was considered by the Mayor to be perfectly explanatory of the failure, and as such he communicated it to all his friends; not being aware, though Selwyn was, that Rochfort lies on the river Charente, some leagues from the sea-shore, and that our troops had never even effected a landing on the French coast."

A gentleman, on being twice cut by Selwyn in

London, came up and reminded him that they had been acquainted at Bath. "I remember it very well; and, when we next meet at Bath, I shall be happy to be acquainted with you again."

When Lord George Gordon asked Selwyn to choose him again for Ludgershall, he replied, the electors would not. "Oh yes! if you would recommend me, they would choose me if I came from the coast of Africa."—"That is, according to what part of the coast you came from; they would certainly, if you came from the Guinea coast." Walpole, who relates this anecdote in a letter to Lady Ossory, remarks on it: "Now, madam, is not this true inspiration as well as true wit? Had one asked him in which of the four quarters of the world Guinea is situated, could he have told?"

On hearing that C—— (a new man) wanted to be made Earl of Ormond, Selwyn said—"It would be very proper, as no doubt there had been many Butlers in the family."

Once, and once only, was he guilty of verse—

ON A PAIR OF SHOES FOUND IN A LADY'S BED.

"Well may suspicion shake its head,
Well may Clarinda's spouse be jealous,
When the dear wanton takes to bed
Her very shoes because they're fellows."

Selwyn died at his house in Cleveland Row, January 25, 1791. He had been for many years a severe sufferer from gout and dropsy: and Wilberforce describes him as looking latterly like the wax figure of a corpse. He continued to haunt the clubs till within a short period before his death; but Mr. Jesse assures us that he died penitent, and that the Bible was frequently read to him, at his own request, during his last illness. By his will he gave 33,000*l.* to Maria Fagniani; 100*l.* each to his two nephews;

his wardrobe and 30*l.* a year to his valet; and the residue of his property to the Duke of Queensberry, with the exception of Ludgershall, which was entailed on the Townshend family. Mr. Jesse quotes some lines from a poetical tribute published soon after his death, in which the Graces are invoked to fulfil several appropriate duties—

> "And fondly dictate to the faithful Muse
> The prime distinction of the friend they lose.
> 'Twas social wit, which, never kindling strife,
> Blazed in the small sweet courtesies of life."

Had we been at the writer's elbow, we would have suggested *shone* or *glowed* in preference to *blazed.*

Walpole, writing to Miss Berry on the day of Selwyn's death, says—"I am on the point of losing or have lost, my oldest acquaintance and friend, George Selwyn, who was yesterday at the extremity. These misfortunes, though they can be so but for a short time, are very sensible to the old; but him I really loved, not only for his infinite wit, but for a thousand good qualities," Again—"Poor Selwyn is gone, to my sorrow; and no wonder Ucalegon feels it!"

The heartlessness of the French set, to which Selwyn and Walpole belonged, is beyond a question. Madame du Deffand's colloquy with one lover, as to the cause of their fifty years' unbroken harmony—"*N'est ce pas que, pendant tout ce tems là, nous avons été souverainement indifferens l'un à l'autre*"—and her behaviour on the death of another, are not invented pleasantries, but melancholy facts. Yet, either we were wrong in supposing that the malady was infectious, and Miss Berry was right in her generous and able vindication of her friend, or Selwyn possessed the peculiar talismanic power of kindling and fixing the affections of his associates; for not only does Walpole invariably mention him when living,

and mourn over him when dead, in terms of heartfelt sincerity, but the same influence appears to have operated on one, whom (possibly with equal injustice) we should have suspected of being, in his own despite, a little hardened by a long course of selfish indulgences—Lord March. Here are a few, and but a few, of the proofs:—

"As to your banker," says his Lordship, "I will call there to-morrow; make yourself easy about that, for I have three thousand pounds now at Coutts's. There will be no bankruptcy without we are both ruined at the same time.—How can you think, my dear George, and I hope you do not think, that anybody, or anything, can make a *tracasserie* between you and me? I take it ill that you even talk of it, which you do in the letter I had by Ligonier. I must be the poorest creature upon earth—after having known you so long, and always as the best and sincerest friend that any one ever had—if any one alive can make any impression upon me when you are concerned. I told you, in a letter some time ago, that I depended more upon the continuance of our friendship than anything else in the world, which I certainly do, because I have so many reasons to know you, and I am sure I know myself."

This speaks well for both head and heart; and how much unhappiness would be prevented by the universal adoption of the principle—never to listen to, much less believe, the alleged unkindness of a friend. All of us have our dissatisfied, complaining, uncongenial moments, when we may neglect ordinary attentions, or let drop words utterly at variance with the habitual suggestions of our hearts. These are repeated from design or carelessness: then come complaints and explanations; confidence is destroyed; "the credulous hope of mutual minds is over;" and thus ends at once the solace of a life.

Lord March's letters are, on the whole, the most valuable in the collection—most characteristic of the

writer, and most redolent of the times. This unfolding of his private relations and inmost feelings is highly favourable to him. As we see him now, he is the very impersonation of his class — shrewd, sensible, observing, generous, and affectionate, amid all his profligacy. His letters are dashed off in clear, manly, unaffected language, on the spur of the occasion; and although they are actually better written than those of many of his noble contemporaries who pretended to literature, it is obvious that the last thing he ever thought of was the style. Walpole's are epistolary compositions; Lord March's are letters in the plain ordinary acceptation of the term. Their idiomatic ease reminds us of Byron's, and in their pregnant brevity they often resemble Swift's hasty dottings down of public events or private chit-chat in the journal to Stella: —

"November, 1766.

"My dear George, — I intended to have written to you last Tuesday, but we sat so late at the House of Lords that I had no time. It was a dull debate, though it lasted a great while. Lord Chatham spoke very well, and with a great deal of temper, and great civility towards the Duke of Bedford; who spoke and approved of the measure at the time of laying the embargo, because of the necessity; but complained of Parliament not being called sooner, because what had been done was illegal, and only to be justified from necessity, which was the turn of the whole debate. Lord Mansfield trimmed in his usual manner, and avoided declaring his opinion, though he argued for the illegality. Lord Camden attacked him very close upon not speaking out his opinion, and declared strongly for the legality. Upon the whole, I think we shall have very little to do in Parliament, and your attendance will be very little wanted."

This was Lord Chatham's first appearance in the House of Lords. In letters dated the same month we find: —

"Monday, 19th November, 1766.

"My dear George, — For fear that I should not have any other moment to write to you, I write this in the King's rooms. I was obliged to dress early to come here, it being the princess's birth-day. I dine at Lord Hertford's, which, with the ball at night, will take up the whole day; you know that he is chamberlain. The Duke of Bedford comes to-day, and on Wednesday, I suppose, they will kiss hands; but nothing is known. Every body agrees that this resignation of the Cavendishes is, of all the resignations, the most foolish; and I hear they begin already to repent of it. They make a fine opportunity for Chatham to strengthen his administration. They want T. Pelham to resign; Ashburnham certainly will now. *The only people that do well are those that never resign;* which Lord Hertford seems to have found out long ago. Saunders and Keppel resign to-morrow."

"November, 1766.

"My dear George, — Jack Shelley has kissed hands for Lord Edgecombe's place. He was offered to be of the Bedchamber, which he has refused, and wants to have the Post-office, which they won't give him. *I find it is imagined that we shall be obliged to send troops into North America, to bring them to a proper obedience.* It is whispered about that the Cavendishes, and Rockingham's friends, will take the first opportunity they can to be hostile to Government: and likewise, that Norton and Wedderburne will certainly oppose. If these things are so, we may perhaps have some more convulsions in the state."

Such letters are excellent correctives of history; but we are not writing history just now, and must turn to those which throw light on manners: —

"Hinchinbrooke, Thursday (1770).

"My dear George, — Our party at Wakefield went off very well. We had hunting, racing, whist, and quinze. My horse won, as I expected, but the odds were upon him, so that I betted very little.

"After hunting on Monday I went to Ossory's, where I lay in my way here. He came with me, and went back

yesterday. I imagine he would have liked to have stayed if Lady Ossory had not been alone. They live but a dull life, and there must be a great deal of love on both sides not to tire. I almost promised to go back for Bedford races, but believe I shall not. I go to Newmarket to-night, and to London to-morrow. Sandwich's house is full of people, and all sorts of things going forward. Miss Ray does the honours perfectly well. While I am writing they are all upon the grass-plot at a foot race."

To make this intelligible, we must go behind the scenes. Wakefield Lodge was the seat of the minister Duke of Grafton, Lady Ossory was his *ci-devant* duchess. She had divorced him on account of his intimacy with Nancy Parsons, described by Walpole as "one of the commonest creatures in London: once much liked, but out of date. He is certainly grown immensely attached to her; so much so, that it has put an end to all his decorum." The culpable excesses into which the Duke was hurried by his passion, are thus stigmatised by Junius:—"It is not the private indulgence, but the public insult of which I complain. The name of Miss Parsons would hardly have been known, if the First Lord of the Treasury had not led her in triumph through the Opera-house, even in the presence of the Queen." Hinchinbrooke, from which Lord March's letter is dated, was the seat of Lord Sandwich, another Cabinet Minister. Miss Ray, who did the honours so well, was his mistress — shot at Covent Garden in 1779. The story is told by Dr. Warner in a paragraph which may serve as a pattern of good condensation:—

"The history of Hackman, Miss Ray's murderer, is this. He was recruiting at Huntingdon; appeared at the ball; was asked by Lord Sandwich to Hinchinbrooke; was introduced to Miss Ray; became violently enamoured of her; made proposals, and was sent into Ireland where his regiment was. He sold out; came back on purpose to be near

the object of his affection; took orders, but could not bend the inflexible fair in a black coat more than in a red. He could not live without her. He meant only to kill himself, and that in her presence; but seeing her coquet it at the play with a young Irish templar, Macnamara, he determined suddenly to despatch her too. He is to be tried on Friday, and hanged on Monday."

The *Morning Post* for April 9, 1799, has this announcement: — "When the news of the above misfortune was carried to the Admiralty, it was received by her noble admirer with the utmost concern. He wept exceedingly, and lamented, with every other token of grief, the interruption of a connexion which had lasted for seventeen years, with great and uninterrupted felicity on both sides."

The catching character of notorious insanity has often been remarked. While the Hackman affair was the popular topic, it seems that no woman, young or old, ugly or pretty, could venture forth without alarm. Lady Ossory writes: —

"This Asiatic weather has certainly affected our cold constitutions. The Duchess of B—— is afraid of being shot wherever she goes. A man has followed Miss Clavering *on foot* from the East Indies; is quite mad; and scenes are daily expected even in the drawing-room. Another man has sworn to shoot a Miss Something, *n'importe*, if she did not run away with him from the Opera.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds has a niece who is troubled with one of these passionate admirers, to whom she has refused her hand and her door. He came a few days since to Sir Joshua's, asked if she was at home, and on being answered in the negative, he desired the footman to tell her to take care, for he was determined to ravish her (pardon the word) whenever he met her. Keep our little friend (Mie Mie) at Paris whilst this mania lasts, for no age will be spared to be in fashion, and I am sure Mie Mie is quite as much in danger as the person I quoted in my first page."

Before quoting those letters of Lord March which

refer to topics of a strictly personal character, we will mention the few authentic particulars that have been recorded of him.

He was born in 1725, succeeded his father in the earldom of March in 1731, his mother in the earldom of Ruglen in 1748, and his cousin in the dukedom of Queensberry in 1778, being then in his fifty-third year. Few men of his day acquired greater notoriety, or were more an object of inquiry and speculation; yet he took little part in political events, except so far as his own interests were affected by them, and it would have been better for his reputation had he taken none. When the King's malady grew serious in 1788, he gave in his allegiance to Fox, and on the recovery of his royal master, was unceremoniously dismissed from his situation of lord of the bed-chamber, which he had held for twenty-eight years notwithstanding the known profligacy of his life. Wraxall says he took a journey to Windsor to learn the exact condition of the King, but was misled by Dr. Warren. The dismissal mattered little. His business was pleasure, his passions were women and the turf; and he contrived to gratify both, without impairing either his fortune or his constitution. As regards the turf, he was thoroughly versed in all its mysteries, and seldom indulged in any sort of gaming unconnected with it, or relating to matters where any undue advantage could be taken of him. On the contrary, he was generally on the look-out for opportunities of turning his own shrewdness and coolness to account. A curious instance is related in Edgeworth's memoirs.

Lord March had noticed a coachmaker's journeyman running with a wheel, and on minuting him by a stop-watch, found that he actually ran a considerable distance faster with it than most men could run unencumbered. A waiter in Betty's fruit-shop was

famous for speed. Lord March adroitly introduced the topic, and, by maintaining what appeared a paradox, easily got bets offered to a large amount, that the waiter would run faster for a mile than any one could run with the hind-wheel of his lordship's carriage, then standing at the door. But he had committed a trifling oversight. The wheel was lower than the wheel the man was used to run with; and the biter would have been bit, had not Sir Francis Blake Delaval suggested an expedient. The night before the match, planks were obtained from the Board of Works, and a raised groove, for the wheel to run in, was constructed across the course. The journeyman won, and the Jockey Club decided in Lord March's favour.

Another of his bets came before the Court of King's Bench. He had laid a wager of five hundred guineas with young Mr. Pigot, that old Mr. Pigot (the father) would die before Sir William Codrington. Old Mr. Pigot died the same morning before the making of the wager, but neither of the parties was acquainted with the fact. The Court held that the dutiful and hopeful heir must pay. A startling example of this style of bet is mentioned by Walpole. "I, t'other night at White's, found a very remarkable entry in our very remarkable wager-book. Lord —— bets Sir —— twenty guineas, that Nash outlives Cibber. *How odd that these two old creatures should live to see both their wagerers put an end to their own lives!*" Lord March's rate of betting was never very high. The largest sum he appears to have won or lost at any race or meeting, during the period over which this correspondence extends, was 4100*l.*, and this is mentioned as a rare occurrence.

He also managed his intercourse with the fair sex in such a manner, as to prevent them from interfering with his peace or even his caprices; and few things

are more amusing than his mode of keeping his occasional *liaisons* from clashing with his permanent ones —for we are obliged to speak of both classes in the plural number. His parting with one of his favourites is peculiarly touching:—

"I am just preparing to conduct the poor little Tondino to Dover. My heart is so full that I can neither think, speak, nor write. How I shall be able to part with her, or bear to come back to this house, I do not know. The sound of her voice fills my eyes with fresh tears. My dear George, *J'ai le cœur si serré que je ne suis bon à present qu'à pleurer.* Take all the care you can of her. *Je la recommende à vous,* my best and only real friend."

In return for the care Selwyn was to take of the Tondino, Lord March, it seems, was to keep an eye to Raton:—

"I wrote to you last night, but I quite forgot Raton. I have not had him to see me to-day, having been the whole morning in the city with Lady H., but I have sent to your maid, and she says that her little king is perfectly well, and in great spirits."

Besides the Tondino, Selwyn had the principal care of the Rena, a beautiful Italian, who stood in nearly the same relation to Lord March as Madame de Pompadour to Louis the Fifteenth. That sagacious favourite, it will be remembered, troubled herself very little about the *Parc aux Cerfs* so long as she retained the chief place in his Majesty's confidence. Queen Caroline is said to have preserved her influence over George the Second by the same policy. The Rena's prudence was put to a severe trial by the arrival of Signora Zamperini, a noted dancer and singer, in 1766. His lordship writes to Selwyn in Paris:—

"I wish I had set out immediately after Newmarket, which I believe I should have done, if I had not taken a

violent fancy for one of the opera girls. This passion is a little abated, and I hope it will be quite so before you and the Rena come over, else I fear it will interrupt our society. But whatever is the case, as I have a real friendship and affection for the Rena, I shall show her every mark of regard and consideration, and be vastly happy to see her. I consider her as a friend, and certainly as one that I love very much; and as such, I hope she will have some indulgence for my follies."

A few days afterwards he writes:—

"The Rena must be mad if she takes any thing of this sort in a serious way. If she does, there is an end to our society. If she does not, we shall go on as we did. I am sure I have all the regard in the world for her, for I love her vastly, and I shall certainly contrive to make her as easy and as happy as I can. I like this little girl, *but how long this liking will last, I cannot tell;* it may increase, or be quite at an end before you arrive."

His lordship had not attained to equal proficiency with Madame de Girardin's hero: "Albert ne viendra pas — il est amoureux pour une quinzaine; il me l'a dit, et il est toujours à la minute dans ces choses-là." In a subsequent letter, we find all three (the Tondino, the Rena, and the Zamperini) mixed up together.

"You see what a situation I am in with my little *Buffa*. She is the prettiest creature that ever was seen; in short, I like her vastly, and she likes me, *because I give her money.*

"I have had a letter from the Tondino to-day. She tells me that she never passed her time so well at Paris as she does now: '*Monsieur du Barri est un homme charmante, et nous donne des bals avec des Princesses.*' Pray, my dear George, find out something that will be agreeable to the little Teresina. '*Consult the Rena about it.*

"I shall write two or three words to the Rena by this post. I told her, in my last letter, that I was supposed to be very much in love with the Zamperini, which certainly would not prevent me from being very happy to see her. I

have been too long accustomed to live with her not to like her, or to be able to forget her, and there is nothing that would give me more pain than not to be able to live with her upon a footing of great intimacy and friendship; *but I am always afraid of every event where women are concerned—they are all so exceedingly wrongheaded.*"

It might be deemed useless, if not impertinent, to keep on repeating that obviously wrong things are wrong; but, in connexion with the next extract, the reader should bear in mind that, at the time in question and for twelve years afterwards, the writer was a lord of the bedchamber in the decorous court of George the Third and Queen Charlotte:—"I was prevented from writing to you last Friday, by being at Newmarket with my little girl. I had the whole family and Cocchi. The beauty went with me in my chaise, and the rest in the old landau."

The family consisted of father, mother, and sister. "As March finds a difficulty (says Williams) in separating her from that rascally garlic tribe, whose very existence depends on her beauty, I do not think he means to make her what our friend the countess (the Rena) was." In another place "March goes on but heavily with his poor child (she was only fifteen). He looks miserable, and yet he takes her off in her opera-dress every night in his chariot."

Numerous allusions, in these volumes, show that Lord March was not devoid of taste for female society of a better order. He is repeatedly spoken of as about to marry this or that young lady of quality; and Wraxall says that he cherished an ardent passion for Miss Pelham, the daughter of the minister, who persevered in refusing his consent to their union on account of the dissipated habits of the peer. He died unmarried, and continued his libertine habits till his death. During the first ten years of the present century, "Old Q.," as he was popularly called, might

constantly be seen in the bow-window of his house in Piccadilly (now divided into the two houses occupied by Lord Cadogan and Lord Rosebery), examining the street passengers through an eyeglass with his remaining eye (it was currently stated that the other was of glass), and when a woman or a horse struck his fancy, an emissary was instantly despatched to make inquiries. That no time might be lost, a pony was always kept saddled for the purpose. "It is a fact," says Wraxall, "that he performed in his own drawing-room the scene of Paris and the goddesses. This classic exhibition took place in his house opposite the Green Park." We do not believe that any exhibition took place at all — founding our scepticism more on the folly than the vice; yet it is melancholy to think to what human nature may be degraded by sensuality.

A striking illustration of his shrewdness was given by Lord Brougham, in his evidence before the Lords' Committee on Lord Campbell's Libel Bill: — "The late Duke of Queensberry was a great alarmist in 1792, like many other very noble, very rich, and very honourable men. He thought there was an end of all things, and he used to be abusing principally the seditious writers of the day, giving them and their authors ill names in great abundance and variety, as infamous, detestable, abominable — when one day some toad-eater who attended his person, added, 'Ay, indeed, and full of such falsehoods.' 'No,' said the duke, 'not falsehoods — they are all so true; that is what makes them so abominable and so dangerous.' If his grace had felt all that was said on the corruptions of parliament and office to be groundless, he would have let them write on in the same strain to the end of time."

A characteristic trait has been preserved by Mr. Wilberforce: — "I always observe that the owners of your grand houses have some snug corner in which

they are glad to shelter themselves from their own magnificence. I remember dining, when I was a young man, with the Duke of Queensberry, at his Richmond villa. The party was very small and select — Pitt, Lord and Lady Chatham, the Duchess of Gordon, and George Selwyn (who lived for society, and continued in it till he looked really like the wax-work figure of a corpse), were amongst the guests. We dined early, that some of our party might be ready to attend the opera. The dinner was sumptuous, the views from the villa quite enchanting, and the Thames in all its glory; but the duke looked on with indifference. 'What is there,' he said, 'to make so much of in the Thames? I am quite tired of it — there it goes, flow, flow, flow, always the same.'"

This is precisely what we should have expected from the Duke; and no one was better qualified than Mr. Wilberforce to explain why the glorious scene before them was a sealed book to the worn voluptuary — why his spirit's eye was blind to it — why every simple, innocent, unforced gratification was denied to him — why the full enjoyment of natural beauty and sublimity is reserved for men of purer lives and higher minds than his.

The Duke's notions of comfort, on which his opinion was worth having, were expressed in a letter to Selwyn: — "I wish you were here (the place is not stated). It is just the house you would wish to be in. There is an excellent library; *a good parson;* the best English and French cookery you ever tasted; strong coffee, and half-crown whist."

It has been stated that he paid his physicians on the plan adopted by the Chinese emperors — so much per week for keeping him alive. If so, he cheated them; for the immediate cause of his death was imprudence in eating fruit. He died in 1810, firm and self-possessed. His deathbed was literally covered

with unopened billets (more than seventy) from women of all classes, which he ordered to be laid on the counterpane as they were brought in. His personal property exceeded a million, and his will, with its twenty-five codicils, was a curious document. He left 150,000*l.* and three houses to Mie Mie, and made her husband (the late Marquis of Hertford, a congenial spirit) his residuary legatee.

Selwyn's most intimate friends and frequent correspondents, after the Duke, were George James (alias Gilly) Williams, and Lord Carlisle.

Of Williams, little is known. He was the son of Peere Williams, the compiler of three volumes of Chancery cases, highly esteemed by equity lawyers. He was connected by marriage with Lord North, and, in 1774, was appointed Receiver-General of Excise. Selwyn, Edgecumbe, Walpole, and Williams used to meet at stated periods at Strawberry Hill, and form what Walpole called his out-of-town party. Gilly's letters convey a highly favourable impression of his social pleasantry; and it seems that he soon acquired some reputation as a wit:—"I have desired Lord R. Bertie (he writes in 1751) to propose me at White's. Don't let any member shake his head at me for a wit; for, God knows, he may as well reject me for being a giant."

Frederick, fifth earl of Carlisle, was a remarkable man in many ways. He filled some important public situations with credit; and, on his being appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, his intimate friend, Storer, writes—"I wish he was Secretary of State. It is a joke to think it too high a step. I am of the old King's opinion, *that a man in this country is fit for any place he can get*, and I am sure Carlisle will be fit for any place he will take."

In literature, he distinguished himself as a poet; but unluckily he is principally known in that capacity

through Lord Byron, who, in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, levels twelve unjust and acrimonious lines at him. In the first sketch of the poem, these twelve lines were wanting, and their place was occupied by two—

> "On one alone Apollo deigns to smile,
> And crowns a new Roscommon in Carlisle."

Lord Carlisle had offended his young relation, between the writing and the printing of the poem, by refusing to introduce him on his taking his seat in the House of Lords. Lord Byron afterwards deeply regretted the injury. There is a beautiful atonement in the third canto of Childe Harold; and in writing, in 1814, to Mr. Rogers, he thus expresses himself—"Is there any chance or possibility of making it up with Lord Carlisle, as I feel disposed to do anything, reasonable or unreasonable, to effect it?"

In early youth, Lord Carlisle, endowed with warm feelings, a lively fancy, and an excitable disposition, was peculiarly liable to be led astray by the temptations which assail young men of rank. In 1769, being then in his twenty-first year, he went abroad, desperately in love with some wedded fair one. She forms the burthen of many a paragraph in his letters to Selwyn; who, though nearly thirty years older, entered warmly into all his feelings.

"I thought I had got the better of that extravagant passion, but I find I am relapsed again. I tremble at the consequences of the meeting, and yet I have not the courage, even in thought, to oppose its temptations. I shall exert all the firmness I am capable of, which, God knows, is very little, upon that occasion. If I am received with coolness, I shall feel it severely. I shall be miserable if I am made too welcome. Good God! what happiness would I not exchange, to be able to live with her without loving her more than friendship will allow! Is my picture hung up, or is it in the passage with its face turned to the walls?"

From the allusion to the picture, and other indications, it is clear that the mysterious lady (who has given rise to much surmise) was the beautiful Lady Sarah Bunbury (*née* Lennox), whom it is said George III. would have married, had he been allowed. His Majesty gave up his own wishes for the good of the country, but the impression remained. Mrs. Pope, the actress, was very like Lady Sarah. On one occasion at the theatre, many years after his marriage, the King turned round to the Queen in a fit of melancholy abstraction, and said, pointing to Mrs. Pope, "She is like Lady Sarah still."

Lord Carlisle got the better of this passion, and married at twenty-two. It would have been well for his peace of mind had he been equally successful in getting the better of a still more fatal one for play. Letter after letter is filled with good resolutions, but the infatuation was too strong. The blow came at last:—

"July, 1776.

"My Dear George.—I have undone myself, and it is to no purpose to conceal from you my abominable madness and folly, though perhaps the particulars may not be known to the rest of the world. I never lost so much in five times as I have done to-night, and am in debt to the house for the whole. You may be sure I do not tell you this with an idea that you can be of the least assistance to me; it is a great deal more than your abilities are equal to. Let me see you, though I shall be ashamed to look at you after your goodness to me."

This letter is endorsed by Selwyn, "After the loss of the ten thousand pounds;" which, following on other losses, appears to have sunk the Earl to the lowest depths of despondency.

"*I do protest to you, that I am so tired of my present manner of passing my time—however I may be kept in coun-*

tendance by the number of those of my own rank and superior fortune—that I never reflect on it without shame. If they will employ me in any part of the world, I will accept the employment; let it tear me, as it will, from every thing dear to me in this country.

* * * *

"If any of our expectations should be gratified in the winter, I cannot expect anything sufficient to balance the expenses of living in London. If I accept anything, I must attend Parliament — I must live in London. If I am not treated with consideration, I can live here; if that can be called living, which is wasting the best years of my life in obscurity: without society to dispel the gloom of a northern climate; left to myself to brood over my follies and indiscretions; to see my children deprived of education by those follies and indiscretions; to be forgotten; to lose my temper; to be neglected; to become cross and morose to those whom I have most reason to love! *Except that the welfare and interest of others depend upon my existence, I should not wish that existence to be of long duration.*"

So thought and felt a man apparently possessed of every blessing—youth, health, talent, birth, fortune, connexion, consideration, and domestic ties of the most endearing kind—

"——— Medio de fonte leporum
Surgit amari aliquid quod in ipsis floribus angat."

The very accident (miscalled advantage) of his position, commends the poisoned chalice to his lips, and the lord of Castle Howard longs for death at twenty-seven! But a truce to reflection till we have introduced another and more memorable subject for it. Lord Carlisle's embarrassments were inextricably mixed up with those of Charles James Fox; and it can therefore hardly be deemed a digression to turn at once to the passages in these volumes which relate to him. The few letters of his own that occur in them, are principally remarkable for ease and simplicity. For example:—

"Paris, Nov. 1770.

"Quantities of cousins visit us; amongst the rest the Duke of Berwick. What an animal it is! I supped last night with Lauzun, Fitz-James, and some others, at what they call a *Clob à l'Anglaise*. It was in a *petite maison* of Lauzun's. There was Madame Briseau, and two other women. The supper was execrably bad. However, the champagne and tokay were excellent; notwithstanding which the fools made *du ponche* with bad rum. This club is to meet every Saturday, either here or at Versailles. I am glad to see that we cannot be foolisher in point of imitation than they are."

Principally through Selwyn's introduction, Fox was on a familiar footing with Madame du Deffand and her set:—

"Madame Geoffrin *m'a chanté la palinodie*. I dine there to-day; she inquires after you very much. I have supped at Madame du Deffand's, who asked me if I was *déjà sous la tutèle de M. Selvin?* I boasted that I was."

In August 23, 1771, he writes:—

"I am reading Clarendon, but scarcely get on faster than you did with your Charles the Fifth. I think the style bad, and that he has a good deal of the old woman in his way of thinking, *but hate the opposite party so much that it gives one a kind of partiality for him.*"

Fox's marvellous powers as a debater were remarked very soon after his first entrance into Parliament. In March, 1770, his delighted father writes to Selwyn:—

"You know by this time that your panegyric upon Charles came about an hour after I had wrote mine to you of the 9th. He writes word that upon February the twelfth he spoke very ill. I do not mind that, and when he speaks so well as to be, as Lady Mary says, the wonder of the age, it does not give me so much pleasure as what you, very justly I think, tell me *de son cœur*. And yet that may not signify. I have

been honest and good-natured, nor can I repent of it; though convinced now that honesty is not the best policy, and that good-nature does not meet with the return it ought to do."

It may be doubted whether his lordship had tried honesty long or steadily enough to qualify him for disputing the received doctrine on the strength of his personal experience.

It appears from a letter addressed by Lord Carlisle to Lady Holland (Fox's mother) in 1773, that he had become security for Fox to the amount of fifteen or sixteen thousand pounds; and a letter to Selwyn, in 1777, puts the ruinous character of their gambling transactions in the strongest light. Lord Ilchester (Fox's cousin) had lost thirteen thousand pounds at one sitting to Lord Carlisle, who offered to take three thousand pounds down. Nothing was paid; but ten years afterwards, when Lord Carlisle pressed for his money, he complains that an attempt was made to construe the offer into a remission of the ten thousand pounds:—

"The only way, in honour, that Lord I. could have accepted my offer, would have been by taking some steps to pay the 3000*l.* I remained in a state of uncertainty, I think, for nearly three years; but his taking no notice of it during that time convinced me that he had no intention of availing himself of it. Charles Fox was also at a much earlier period clear that he never meant to accept it. There is also great justice in the behaviour of the family in passing by the instantaneous payment of, I believe, five thousand pounds to Charles, won at the same sitting, without any observations. *At one period of the play, I remember there was a balance in favour of one of those gentlemen, but of which I protest I do not remember, of about fifty thousand.*"

At the time in question, Fox was hardly eighteen. The following letter from Lord Carlisle, written in 1771, contains some highly interesting information

respecting the youthful habits, and already vast intellectual pre-eminence, of the embryo statesman:—

"It gives me great pain to hear that Charles begins to be unreasonably impatient at losing. I fear it is the prologue to much fretfulness of temper; for disappointment in raising money, and any serious reflections upon his situation, will (in spite of his affected spirits and dissipation, which sit very well upon Richard) occasion him many disagreeable moments. They will be the more painful, when he reflects that he is not following the natural bent of his genius; for that would lead him to all serious inquiry and laudable pursuits, which he has in some measure neglected, to hear Lord Bolingbroke's applause, and now is obliged to have recourse to it, and play, to hinder him from thinking how he has perverted the ends for which he was born. *I believe there never was a person yet created who had the faculty of reasoning like him. His judgments are never wrong; his decision is formed quicker than any man's I ever conversed with; and he never seems to mistake but in his own affairs.*"

Lord Carlisle's fears proved groundless in one respect. Fox's sweetness of temper remained with him to the last; but it is most painful to think how much mankind has lost through his recklessness. There is no saying what might not have been effected by such a man, had he simply followed the example of his great rival in one respect. "We played a good deal at Goosetree's," says Wilberforce, "and I well remember the intense earnestness which Pitt displayed when joining in these games of chance. He perceived their increasing fascination, and soon after abandoned it for ever." Wilberforce's own cure is thus recorded by his biographers, on the authority of his private Journal:—"We can have no play to-night," complained some of the party at the club, "for St. Andrew is not here to keep bank. 'Wilberforce,' said Mr. Bankes, who never joined himself, 'if you will keep it, I will give you a guinea.' The playful challenge was accepted, but as the game grew deep,

he rose the winner of 600*l*. Much of this was lost by those who were only heirs to future fortunes, and could not therefore meet such a call without inconvenience. The pain he felt at their annoyance cured him of a taste which seemed but too likely to become predominant."

Goosetree's being then almost exclusively composed of incipient orators and embryo statesmen, the call for a gaming-table there may be regarded as a decisive proof of the universal prevalence of the vice. But most of these were the friends and followers of Pitt; and when his star gained the ascendant, idleness was no longer the order of the day among politicians, and rising young men gave up faro and hazard for Blackstone and Adam Smith. We know of no candidate for high office, entering public life after 1784, who did not affect prudence and propriety; and probably we shall never again see a parliamentary leader aspire, like Bolingbroke,

"To shine a Tully and a Wilmot too."

Gaming, however, continued a blot on our manners and morals for many years afterwards; and it may not be uninstructive to trace its progress and decline.

During the whole of the last century, gaming of some sort was an ordinary amusement for both sexes in the best society. In General Burgoyne's play of "The Heiress," Mrs. Blandish exclaims—"Time thrown away in the country! as if women of fashion left London to turn freckled shepherdesses! No, no; cards, cards and backgammon, are the delights of rural life; and, slightly as you may think of my skill, at the year's end I am no inconsiderable sharer in the pin-money of my society." Till near the commencement of the present, the favourite game was faro; and, as it was a decided advantage to hold the Bank, masters and mistresses of noble houses, less scrupulous

than Wilberforce, frequently volunteered to fleece and amuse their company. But scandal having made busy with the names of some of them, it became usual to hire a professed gamester at five or ten guineas a night to set up a table for the evening, as we should hire Lablache for a concert, or Weippert for a ball. Faro gradually dropped out of fashion; macao took its place: hazard was never wanting, and whist began to be played for stakes which would have satisfied Fox himself; who, though it was calculated that he might have netted four or five thousand a year by games of skill, complained that they afforded no excitement.

Watier's club, in Piccadilly, was the resort of the macao-players. It was kept by an old *maître d'hôtel* of George the Fourth, a character in his way, who took a just pride in the cookery and wines of his establishment. All the brilliant stars of fashion, (and fashion was power then,) frequented it, with Brummell for their sun. "Poor Brummell dead, in misery and idiotcy, at Caen! and I remember him in all his glory, cutting his jokes after the opera at White's, in a black velvet great-coat, and a cocked hat on his well-powdered head."* Nearly the same turn of reflection is suggested as we run over the names of his associates. Almost all of them were ruined; three out of four, irretrievably. Indeed, it was the forced expatriation of its supporters that caused the club to be broken up. During the same period (from 1810 to 1815 or thereabouts) there was a great deal of high play at White's and Brookes's, particularly whist. At Brookes's figured some remarkable characters—as Tippoo Smith, by common consent the best whist-player of his day; and an old gentleman nicknamed Neptune, from his having once flung himself into the sea in a fit of despair at being, as he thought, ruined. He was fished out in

* *Private MS.*

time, cast up his betting-book a second time, found he was not ruined, and played on during the remainder of his life.

The most distinguished player at White's was the nobleman who was presented at the Salon in Paris as *Le Wellington des Joueurs;* and he richly merited the name, if skill, temper, and the most daring courage, are titles to it. The greatest genius, however, is not infallible. He once lost three thousand four hundred pounds at whist by not remembering that the seven of hearts was in. He played at hazard for the highest stakes that any one could be got to play with him, and at one time was supposed to have won nearly a hundred thousand pounds; but it all went, along with a great deal more, at Crockford's.

There was also a great deal of play at Graham's, the Union, the Cocoa-tree, and other clubs of the second order in point of fashion. Here large sums were hazarded with equal rashness; and remarkable characters started up. Among the most conspicuous was the late Colonel Aubrey, who literally passed his life at play. He did nothing else, morning, noon, and night; and it was computed that he had paid more than sixty thousand pounds for card-money. He was a very fine player at all games, and a shrewd, clever man. He had been twice to India, and made two fortunes. It was said that he lost the first on his way home, transferred himself from one ship to another without landing, went back, and made the second. His life was a continual alternation between poverty and wealth; and he used to say, the greatest pleasure in life is winning at cards—the next greatest, losing.

For several years deep play went on at all these clubs—fluctuating both as to locality and amount—till by degrees it began to flag. It had got to a low ebb when Crockford came to London, and laid the

foundation of the most colossal fortune that was ever made by play. He began by taking Watier's old club-house, in partnership with a man named Taylor. They set up a hazard-bank, and won a great deal of money, but quarrelled and separated at the end of the first year. Taylor continued where he was, had a bad year, and broke. Crockford removed to St. James's Street, had a good year, and instantly set about building the magnificent club-house which bore his name. It rose like a creation of Aladdin's lamp; and the genii themselves could hardly have surpassed the beauty of the internal decorations, or have furnished a more accomplished *maître d'hôtel* than Ude. To make the company as select as possible, the establishment was regularly organised as a club, and the election of members vested in a committee. "Crockford's" became the rage, and the votaries of fashion, whether they liked play or not, hastened to enrol themselves. The Duke of Wellington was an original member, although (unlike Blucher, who repeatedly lost everything he had at play) the Great Captain was never known to play deep at any game except war or politics. Card-tables were regularly placed, and whist was played occasionally; but the aim, end, and final cause of the whole was the hazard-bank, at which the proprietor took his nightly stand, prepared for all comers. There was a recognised limit, at which (after losing a certain sum) he might declare the bank broke for the night; but he knew his business too well to stop.

The speculation, it is hardly necessary to add, was eminently successful. During several years, everything that any body had to lose and cared to risk, was swallowed up. *Le Wellington des Joueurs* lost twenty-three thousand pounds at a sitting, beginning at twelve at night, and ending at seven the following evening. He and three other noblemen could not

have lost less, sooner or later, than a hundred thousand pounds a-piece. Others lost in proportion (or out of proportion) to their means; but we leave it to less occupied moralists and better calculators to say, how many ruined families went to make Mr. Crockford a *millionaire* — for a *millionaire* he became in the English sense of the term, after making the largest possible allowance for bad debts. A vast sum, perhaps half a million, remained due to him; but as he won all his debtors were able to raise, and easy credit was the most fatal of his lures*, we cannot make up our minds to condole with him on that account. He retired at length — *lassatus non satiatus* — much as an Indian chief retires from a hunting country when there is not game enough left for his tribe; and the club has been broken up.

Some good was certainly produced by it. In the first place, private gambling (between gentleman and gentleman) with its degrading incidents, as illustrated by the foregoing letters, is no longer tolerated in society. In the second place, this very circumstance brings the worst part of the practice within the reach of the law; for public gambling, which only exists by and through what are popularly termed "hells," may be easily suppressed. There are, or recently were, more than twenty of these establishments in Pall-Mall, Piccadilly, and St. James's, called into existence by Crockford's success. Why does not the police interfere? If the police cannot, why does not the legislature? Not an hour should be lost in putting

* Brookes was equally accommodating:—

> "From liberal Brookes, whose speculative skill
> Is hasty credit and a distant bill;
> Who, nursed in clubs, disdains a vulgar trade,
> Exults to trust, and blushes to be paid."

—Verses, *From the Hon. Charles James Fox, partridge-shooting, to the Hon. John Townshend, cruising*; by Tickell.

down this monstrous evil. We claim to be superior in morals and public order to the French; yet all the public gaming-tables of Paris were suppressed several years ago, and (what is more) suppressed without difficulty, the moment the police set to work in good earnest.*

In conclusion, we are happy to say that the comparison, suggested by Selwyn's life and letters, between the manners and morals of the last century and our own, is highly satisfactory. Intellectual tastes have nearly superseded the necessity, formerly felt by the unoccupied classes, of resorting to coarse indulgences or strong excitements; and respect for public opinion induces those among them who continue unreclaimed, to conceal their transgressions from the world. It is also worthy of note, that the few persons of noble birth or high connexion who have recently attracted attention by their laxity, are professed votaries of (what they call) pleasure; and are no longer encouraged by the example, or elevated by the companionship, of men distinguished in the senate, the cabinet, or the court. No Prime Minister escorts a woman of the town through the Crush-room of the Opera; no First Lord of the Admiralty permits his mistress to do the honours of his house, or weeps over her in the columns of the "Morning Post;" no Lord of the Bedchamber starts for Newmarket with a *danseuse* in his carriage, and her whole family in his train; our parliamentary leaders do not dissipate their best energies at the gaming-table; our privy councillors do not attend cock-fights; and, among the many calumnies levelled at our public men, they have not been accused (as General Bur-

* Since this was written, the most notorious London establishments have been suppressed.

goyne was by Junius) of lying in wait for inexperienced lads to plunder at play.

Though the signs are less marked, the improvement in the female aristocracy is not less certain; for it may safely be taken for granted that the practice of gambling was fraught with the worst consequences to the finest feelings and best qualities of the sex. The chief danger is hinted at in "The Provoked Husband."

"*Lord Townley.*—'Tis not your ill hours that always disturb me, but as often the ill company that occasion those hours.

"*Lady Townley.*—Sure I don't understand you now, my Lord. What ill company do I keep?"

"*Lord Townley.*—Why, at best, women that lose their money, and men that win it; *or perhaps men that are voluntary bubbles at one game, in hopes a lady will give them fair play at another.*"

The facts confirm the theory. Walpole's Letters, and the volumes before us, teem with allusions to proved or understood cases of matrimonial infidelity; and the manner in which notorious irregularities were brazened out, shows that the offenders did not always encounter the universal reprobation of society. Miss Berry, speaking of the Duchess of Norfolk's divorce in 1697, observes:—

"Many circumstances of this lady's case show how much the ordinary habits of life were overstepped, and what precautions were thought necessary previous to such misconduct. A house taken at Lambeth, then a small and little frequented village, whose nearest communication with Westminster was by a horse-ferry—this house, hired and resorted to under feigned names, and occupied by foreign servants, who it was supposed could not identify the lady, are not measures taken in a country where the crime they

were meant to conceal was frequent." (*England and France*, vol. i. p. 297.)

This test would be fatal to the female nobility of England half a century later; for many of them took no pains whatever to conceal their immoralities. We are obliged, from obvious motives, to refrain from mentioning some conclusive instances; but it is notorious that Lady Vane gave Smollett the materials for the Memoirs of a Lady of Quality (herself) published in "Peregrine Pickle;" that Lady Townshend sat (perhaps not so willingly) for the portrait of Lady Bellaston in "Tom Jones;" and we can hardly do wrong in copying a note which Lord Dover has annexed to the name of a Miss Edwards in his edition of Walpole's Letters:—"Miss Edwards, an unmarried lady of great fortune, who (1742) openly kept Lord A. Hamilton."

Gilly Williams mentions a caprice of a more respectable kind, which was far from uncommon at the period:—

"Lord Rockingham's youngest sister has just married her footman, John Sturgeon. Surely he is the very first of that name that ever had a Right Honourable attached to it. I made the Duchess of Bedford laugh yesterday with the story of Lord March's handsome Jack wanting to go to live with Lady Harrington."

. . . . . .

"The girls talk of nothing but the match between Lord Rockingham's sister and her footman. Never so much —— and discretion met together; for she has entailed her fortune with as much circumspection as Lord Mansfield could have done, and has not left one cranny of the law unstopped. They used to pass many hours together, which she called teaching John the mathematics."

Another unmarried woman of quality, the daughter of an earl, had ruined herself at play, and was on her road to the Continent, to avoid being arrested by her

creditors. At Sittingbourne, where she stopped to change horses, a bright idea struck her. She called in the postilion, and asked him if he had any objection to a wife who would allow him fifty pounds a year, provided he would never claim the privilege of a husband. The bargain was speedily struck. They were legally married with all practicable despatch; and when legal proceedings were taken against her, she pleaded *coverture*.

Unless John was a very unapt scholar, he must soon have become as worthy an object of a lady's favour, so far as mental culture was concerned, as Sir John Germaine, who, after occasioning the Duchess of Norfolk's divorce, married a noble heiress, Lady Betty Berkeley, and lived till the middle of the last century. Miss Berry tells us that he actually left a legacy to Sir Matthew Decker, under a belief that he was the author of the Gospel of St. Matthew!

It has been thought by some that we have lost in spirit and grace what we have gained in decency, and that society is no longer so gay, easy, accomplished, or even literary, as it used to be. Miss Berry, though she commends the fashion which encouraged occupation and mental acquirements, cannot refrain from a sly sarcasm at the "new prodigies who were already great orators at Eton, and profound politicians before they left Christchurch or Trinity,"—the gentlemen to whom "it was easier to be foolishly bustling than seriously employed;" and Mr. Moore maintains a yet more startling doctrine.

"Without any disparagement of the many and useful talents which are at present nowhere more conspicuous than in the upper ranks of society, it may be owned that for wit, social powers, and literary accomplishments, the political men of the period under consideration (1780) formed such an assemblage as it would be flattery to say that our own times can parallel. The natural tendency of the French Revolu-

tion was to produce in the higher classes of England an increased reserve of manner, and of course a proportionate restraint on all within their circle, which have been fatal to conviviality and humour, and not very propitious to wit — subduing both manners and conversation to a sort of polished level, to rise above which is often thought almost as vulgar as to sink below it. Of the greater ease of manners that existed some forty or fifty years ago, one trifling but not the less significant indication was the habit then prevalent among men of high station, of calling each other by such familiar names as Dick, Jack, Tom, &c. &c. — a mode of address that brings with it in its very sound the notion of conviviality and playfulness, and, however unrefined, implies at least that ease and *sea-room* in which wit spreads its canvas most fearlessly." (*Life of Sheridan.*)

We differ with unfeigned reluctance from Mr. Moore; but he is surely mistaken in supposing that the higher classes in England have contracted an increased reserve of manner in consequence of the French Revolution; or shown more anxiety on that account to intrench themselves within the privileges of their rank. On the contrary, the tendency of that event, and of our own Reform Bill, was and is to make them more anxious to identify themselves in feeling and interest with the people. If they have ceased to be familiar, it is because they have ceased to be exclusive; restraint is necessary, because society is mixed; and there is no reason why men of rank should change their mode of address to men of rank, except that they live less with one another and more with the world at large. The very peculiarity in question was observed by Mrs. Trollope in the most exclusive coterie in Europe, the *crême de la crême* of Vienna. "All the ladies address each other by their Christian names, and you may pass evening after evening surrounded by Princesses and Countesses, without ever hearing any other appellations than Therese, Flora, Laura, or Pepè."

This may be very agreeable for the privileged few, and we readily admit that intimacy is a great promoter of humour. Few of Selwyn's *bon-mots* could have been hazarded at a mixed party. But we are as far as ever from admitting Mr. Moore's proposition in the main. It is not flattery but sober truth to say, that our public men have contracted no reserve beyond that which the voluntary enlargement of their circle has entailed upon them. It would be difficult to contend that they have impaired their social powers by mixing with eminent authors, men of science, and artists, whatever influence these may have exercised upon their wit or humour; and, even as regards wit or humour, it would simply be necessary to run over a few known names to vindicate our equality in both. Modern conversation is rich with the product of every soil, the spoils of every clime; and it would be a grave error to suppose that those who contribute most to it seldom meet in intimacy. They meet very often, but they belong to several co-equal and intersecting circles, instead of keeping to one, and making that the sole object of interest.

There are signs, moreover, that he who runs may read. It is clear that they talked politics as much as we do; perhaps more, since their eagerness was so manifest to a Frenchwoman. "Madame de Boufflers (writes Williams in 1763) is out of patience with our politics, and our ridiculous abuse of every person who either governs or is likely to govern us." This was a serious drawback, but not the most serious. Selwyn's principal correspondents were not dandies and fine ladies, but the most cultivated men and women of the highest class; including several on whom Mr. Moore would rely, if we came to a division on the question. The masterpieces of English light literature, and several other standard works, appeared during their correspondence. Yet neither Field-

ing, Richardson, Smollett, Gray, Goldsmith, Hume, Robertson, Johnson, Gibbon, nor even Burke, elicits a remark. There is one allusion to Garrick (by Rigby); one to Reynolds (by Lord Carlisle); and one to Gainsborough (by Gilly Williams), as "the painter by whom, if you remember, we once saw the caricature of old Winchilsea."

There was no want of classical acquirement, it is true. Many wrote graceful verses; and Fox and Walpole had a taste for contemporary literature but Fox kept it to himself for lack of sympathy, and Walpole was ashamed of it. By literature, however, must be understood merely the *Belles Lettres;* for Fox confessed late in life that he had never been able to get through "The Wealth of Nations."

Familiarity, again, is a great charm, but the habits which are the conditions of its existence beget monotony. In Charles the Second's reign, when it was the fashion to go to sea and fight the Dutch, instead of taking lodgings at Melton, or attending *battues*, Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, tells us in his "Memoirs," that a party of gay, witty, lettered profligates were becalmed on board the Duke of York's ship, and got so tired of one another, that the first care each took on landing was to ascertain where the rest were going, in order to get away from them. We are not aware whether the *habitués* of White's or Brookes's, seventy or eighty years ago, were ever brought to such a pass; but we know (and there is no getting over this) that they habitually resorted to the gaming-table—

> "Unknown to such, when sensual pleasures cloy,
> To fill the languid pause with finer joy."

With rare exceptions, the most accomplished persons, about to risk more than they can afford to lose, will be found both ill-disposed, and ill-qualified, for

the easy equable enjoyment of conversation; although (with the aid of wine) they may have their occasional bursts of sparkling pleasantry.

To sum up all—there is a halo floating over certain periods; dazzling associations may cluster round a name: "'tis distance lends enchantment to the view;" and living witnesses who have known both generations, will always, by a law of our nature, award the palm to the companions of their youth. But it will require stronger arguments than have been adduced yet, to convince us that the social powers of any class have fallen off, whilst morality, taste, knowledge, general freedom of intercourse and liberality of opinion, have been advancing; or that the mind necessarily loses any portion of its playfulness, when it quits the enervating atmosphere of idleness and dissipation for the purer air and brighter skies of Art, Literature and Philosophy.

LORD CHESTERFIELD.

(From the Edinburgh Review, Oct. 1845.)

The Letters of Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield: including numerous Letters now first published from the original Manuscripts. Edited, with Notes, by Lord Mahon. 4 vols. 8vo. London: 1845.

The name of Chesterfield has become a synonyme for good breeding and politeness. It is associated in our minds with all that is graceful in manner and cold in heart, attractive in appearance and unamiable in reality. The image it calls up is that of a man rather below the middle height, in a court suit and blue riband, with regular features, wearing an habitual expression of gentlemanlike ease. His address is insinuating, his bow perfect, his compliments rival those of *Le Grand Monarque* in delicacy: laughter is too demonstrative for him, but the smile of courtesy is ever on his lip; and by the time he has gone through the circle, the avowed object of his daily ambition is accomplished — all the women are already half in love with him, and every man is desirous to be his friend. But the name recalls little or nothing of the statesman, the orator, the wit. We forget that this same little man was one of the best Lords-Lieutenant Ireland ever knew, the best speaker in the House of Lords till Pitt and Murray entered it, one of our most graceful essayists, and the wittiest man of quality of his time — a time when wit meant something more than pleasantry or sparkle, and men of quality prided themselves on

having dined in company with Swift, supped at Button's with "the great Mr. Addison," or passed an evening at Pope's villa at Twickenham. *Nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futuræ:* what would be the feelings of the all-accomplished and eloquent earl himself, were he to wake from the dead and find his reputation resting on his confidential "Letters to his Son!" He would be little less astonished than Petrarch, were *he* to wake up and find his "Africa" forgotten, and his "Sonnets" the keystone of his fame.

Dr. Johnson has said, that whenever the public think long about a matter, they generally think right. Perhaps they do when they are familiar with the facts, and when no twist or warp has been given to the judgment they found upon them. But the best of Lord Chesterfield was that of which he left no lasting or no easily accessible memorials; and Dr. Johnson himself gave a warp to the judgment of the public when he said of his lordship, that he was "a lord among wits, and a wit among lords;" and pronounced his famous diatribe against the "Letters" (that they taught the morals of a —— and the manners of a dancing-master); although we find him afterwards telling Boswell — "I think it might be made a very pretty book. Take out the immorality, and it should be put into the hands of every young gentleman."

The authority of the "Letters" is certainly impaired by the popular notion entertained of his lordship as a mere courtier; and for this reason a short review of his life will form the best introduction to his writings, which are peculiarly of a class requiring to be read by the light that personal history throws upon them;—like Rochfoucauld's "Maxims," which it is impossible to appreciate or apply without an intimate knowledge of the men and women of the *Fronde*. It is, moreover, good for literature to take

retrospective views occasionally of books and characters that have obtained a prescriptive reputation; and there are passages in Lord Chesterfield's career which deserve to be dwelt upon, independently of their use in illustrating his rules of conduct and speculations on society. We propose, then, with the aid of Dr. Maty and Lord Mahon, to bring this ornament of his order once more before that public for which he loved to drape himself — to sift his claims, and settle definitively his place and precedence as a writer, a moralist, and a man.

The "Memoir of the Life of the Earl of Chesterfield," which occupies the whole of the first volume of the edition of his miscellaneous works published in 1777, consists of six sections. The first five were written by Dr. Maty; the sixth by Mr. Justamond, who, on Dr. Maty's death, took charge of the publication. This Memoir is a tolerably fair specimen of second-rate biography.

Lord Mahon has contented himself with prefixing to his edition of the "Letters" the sketch of Lord Chesterfield's life and character published in his (Lord Mahon's) "History of England."* It is so well written that we could wish it had been longer. Lord Mahon, himself a Stanhope, has of course enjoyed ample opportunities of making his edition complete. He says he had two objects in view — to combine the scattered correspondence in one uniform arrangement, with explanatory notes; and to publish many characteristic letters which had been kept back. He has succeeded in both objects; the new matter is valuable, the arrangement is judicious, and the only fault that can reasonably be found with the notes is, that they are short and far between. We will now proceed to the immediate purpose of this essay.

* See vol. iii.

The family of Stanhope is one of the best in England, and boasts three peerages, Chesterfield, Stanhope, and Harrington. The date of the earldom of Chesterfield is 1628. The first earl, a devoted Royalist, died in 1656, and the title descended to his grandson, the "Milord Chesterfield" who plays so conspicuous a part in Grammont's Memoirs. His son, the father of *the* earl, was unknown beyond the circles of private life. He is described as a man "of a morose disposition and violent passions, who often thought that people behaved ill to him, when they did not in the least intend it." He married one of the daughters of George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, by whom he had four sons and two daughters. She did not live long enough to take charge of their education, and, in consequence of the unaccountable dislike or indifference of the father, the care of the eldest devolved on his grandmother, Lady Halifax, a woman of understanding, conduct, and sensibility. Dr. Maty somewhat magniloquently compares her house to that of the mother of the Gracchi; and it was, undoubtedly, the resort of the leading politicians and the best company, from whom much might be learnt by so apt a scholar and nice observer as Lord Chesterfield.

"He was very young" (says Dr. Maty) "when Lord Galway — who, though not a very fortunate general, was a man of uncommon penetration and merit, and who often visited the Marchioness of Halifax — observing in him a strong inclination for a political life, but at the same time an unconquerable taste for pleasure, with some tincture of laziness, gave him the following advice—'If you intend to be a man of business, you must be an early riser. In the distinguished posts your parts, rank, and fortune, will entitle you to fill, you will be liable to have visitors at every hour of the day, and unless you will

rise constantly at an early hour, you will never have any leisure to yourself.'" He took the hint, and acted upon it through life; nor, although his education till his eighteenth year was strictly private, does he appear to have ever wanted the spur of emulation, which it is thought the peculiar privilege of a public school to apply. "When I was at your age (eleven)" he tells his son, "I should have been ashamed if any boy of that age had learned his book better, or played at any play better than I did; and I should not have rested a moment till I had got before him."

In 1712, being then in his eighteenth year, he was entered at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and became a resident member of that university. We are tempted to translate a letter which he wrote in French to his language-master, M. Joumeau, soon after his arrival: —

"I had a lively pleasure in reading the letter which you were so kind as to write to me. It seemed as if you were speaking to me, and that I was in the company of the man in the world I esteem the most, and whom I wish most ardently to please. I should have answered it sooner, had I not been passing this week at the Bishop of Ely's, who lives fifteen miles off. In this short time I have seen more of the country than I had seen before in all my life, and which is very agreeable in this neighbourhood.

"I continue constant to my studies, which as yet are but Latin and Greek, because the fair, which is to take place in ten days, would have interrupted them; but as soon as this diversion is over, I am to commence civil law, philosophy, and a little mathematics; but as for anatomy, it will not be in my power to learn it, for, although there is a poor devil that was hanged ready, the surgeon who was wont to perform these operations has objected this time because the subject is a man, and then he says the students are not desirous to attend. I find this college infinitely the best in the whole university, for it is the smallest, and it is filled with lawyers, who have

been in the world, and understand life. *We have but one clergyman, who is also the only man in the college who gets drunk.* Let them say what they will, there is very little debauchery in this university, and particularly among the people of condition; for it would require the taste of a porter to put up with it here."

This letter is curious, not merely as giving an insight into the writer's habits, but as showing that, even at this early period, he possessed the same liveliness of remark, light humour, and careless ease of expression, which form the great charm of his "Letters" in more advanced age, and which he himself would probably have attributed to persevering care in the formation of a style. For this reason it is difficult to believe the account he gives of his own tone and manner on leaving the university. "When I first came into the world at nineteen, I left the University of Cambridge, where I was an absolute pedant. When I talked my best I talked Horace; when I aimed at being facetious I quoted Martial; and when I had a mind to be a fine gentleman I talked Ovid."

His object in thus exaggerating his own defects probably was, to show his son what pains could do in overcoming deficiencies. But there is no doubt he studied hard enough to justify a fair share of pedantry, so far as learning can justify it; and it seems that he paid particular attention to the great masters of oratory. "So long ago as when I was at Cambridge, whenever I read pieces of eloquence, (and indeed they were my principal study,) whether ancient or modern, I used to write down the shining passages, and then translate them as well and elegantly as ever I could; if Latin or French, into English; if English, into French. This, which I practised for some years, not only improved and formed my style, but imprinted in my mind and memory the best thoughts

of the best authors." He remained about two years at Cambridge, and then started on the grand tour, unattended by a Governor. Nothing worth mentioning is recorded of him by others or himself, till his travels brought him, in the summer of 1714, to the Hague, where, for the first time, he began to play an independent part in society. The love of shining, which he so strongly inculcates, here broke out in a manner which shows it to be not unaccompanied by risk. "When I went abroad, I first went to the Hague, where gaming was much in fashion, and where I observed that many people of shining rank and character gained too. I was then young, and silly enough to believe that gaming was one of their accomplishments; and, as I aimed at perfection, I adopted gaming as a necessary step to it. Thus I acquired by error the habit of a vice, which, far from adorning my character, has, I am conscious, been a great blemish to it."

From the Hague he repaired to Paris, where so much of the college rust as still stuck to him was rapidly rubbed off. In December, 1714, he writes to M. Joumeau: — "I shall not give you my opinion of the French, because I am very often taken for one, and many a Frenchman has paid me the highest compliment they think they can pay to any one, which is — Sir, you are just like one of us. I will merely tell you that I am insolent; that I talk much, very loud, and in a dogmatical tone. I sing and dance as I walk; and lastly, that I spend a monstrous deal of money in powder, feathers, and white gloves." — He afterwards thought better of the French; and, like Marlow in "She Stoops to Conquer," he must have kept his loud talking and gay rattle for the coffee-house and the barmaid; for on his first arrival at Paris he suffered under a most pitiable degree of *mauvaise honte* in the drawing-room.

—"I got more courage soon afterwards, and was intrepid enough to go up to a fine woman, and tell her that I thought it a warm day; she answered me very civilly, that she thought so too; upon which the conversation ceased on my part for some time, till she, good-naturedly resuming, spoke to me thus: 'I see your embarrassment, and I am sure the few words you said to me cost you a great deal; but do not be discouraged for that reason, and avoid good company. We see that you desire to please, and that is the main point; you want only the manner, and you think that you want it still more than you do. You must go through your novitiate before you can profess good breeding; and, if you will be my novice, I will present you to my acquaintance as such.' You will easily imagine how much this speech pleased me, and how awkwardly I answered it; I hemmed once or twice (for it gave me a burr in my throat) before I could tell her that I was very much obliged to her; that it was true I had a great deal of reason to distrust my own behaviour, not being used to fine company; and that I should be proud of being her novice and receiving her instructions. As soon as I had fumbled out this answer, she called up three or four people to her, and said *Sçavez-vous* (for she was a foreigner, and I was abroad), *que j'ai entrepris ce jeune homme et qu'il le faut rassurer? Pour moi, je crois en avoir fait la conquête, car il s'est emancipé dans le moment au point de me dire en tremblant qu'il faisoit chaud. Il faut que vous m'aidiez à le derouiller. Il lui faut nécessairement une passion, et s'il ne m'en juge pas digne, nous lui en chercherons quelque autre. Au reste, mon novice, n'allez pas vous encanailler avec des filles d'opéra et des comédiennes, qui vous épargneront les frais et du sentiment et de la politesse, mais qui vous en couteront bien plus à tout autre égard.*"

The death of Queen Anne opened a new career for every young man of an ambitious turn of mind, and Lord Stanhope (for this was his title till the death of his father in 1726) hurried home to assist in strengthening the new dynasty. He entered public life under the auspices of his relative, the first Earl Stanhope, the favourite minister of George I., who immediately appointed him one of the gentlemen of

the bed-chamber to the Prince of Wales—a post well suited to his age and habits. It gave him an opportunity of observing the manners of a court; and his "Characters," as well as numerous remarks scattered through his "Letters," show that he made an excellent use of it.

He entered the House of Commons as member for St. Germains in the first parliament of George I., and lost no time in trying the efficacy of the system of training to which he had for years subjected himself with the view of becoming an orator. He spoke for the first time in support of the proposed impeachment of the Duke of Ormond, and attracted some attention by the decided tone of his opinions, as well as by the fluency of his declamation. But he had hardly done speaking when one of the opposite party took him on one side, paid him a high compliment on his *début*, and reminded him that, as he still wanted six weeks of being of age, he was liable to a heavy penalty for sitting or voting in the House, and must immediately absent himself for a brief interval, unless he wished his minority to be made known. Lord Stanhope made the gentleman a low bow, quitted the House directly without voting, and went to Paris, where he rendered himself extremely useful in procuring information regarding the Jacobite rising in 1715. On his return the year following, he took frequent part in the debates and proceedings of the House, and had gained sufficient distinction to justify the advancement which his friend and relation the Minister was anxious to confer upon him; when, unluckily, the Prince's quarrel with the King broke out, and Lord Stanhope remained faithful to the Prince, although some tempting offers were made to him. Among others, it was proposed to make his father a Duke, and the old Earl was extremely angry with him for not closing with the proposal. Lord Stanhope, how-

ever, does not appear to have gone into systematic opposition; he occasionally lent his vote to the Government, and in 1723 he was rewarded for coming to their aid on a critical occasion, by being appointed Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard. Lord Townshend, his predecessor in the post, advised him to make it more profitable than he himself had done, by disposing of the places. "For once," (was the answer,) "I would rather follow your lordship's example than your advice." He was also offered the red riband on the revival of the Bath in 1725; but he thought the order beneath his rank, and was even angry with his younger brother for accepting it. We need hardly say that he was too sensible a man to be indifferent to marks of honour, provided they really carried consideration along with them; and six years later we find him claiming the Garter from Sir Robert Walpole, with the remark, "I am a man of pleasure, and the blue riband would add two inches to my height."

He probably owed his importance at this time to his rank and connexions, rather than to his powers as a speaker; for the House of Commons was certainly an uncongenial field for them. He was not fitted either by nature or study for a popular assembly. His style wanted the requisite degree of nerve and muscle, as much as his physical frame. His very taste and refinement were against him; and it is impossible to conceive a man succeeding in that House, who made it his chief study to avoid giving way to strong excitement or engaging in rough competition of any kind. It is also stated by Dr. Maty that there was another cause for his not appearing to advantage there. He is said to have stood in awe of a member who was in the habit of mimicking the tone and action of the more remarkable speakers; and this is not unlikely, for in his Letter to his God-

son he remarks, that "ridicule, though not founded upon truth, will stick for some time, and if thrown by a skilful hand, perhaps for ever." *Il n'y a rien qui tue comme un ridicule.*

The death of his father, in 1726, at length placed him in a more appropriate sphere of action. The House of Lords at that period filled a very different position from what it does at present; and the fate of governments hung upon its debates and divisions nearly as often as on those of the House of Commons. Eighty or a hundred peers were not an unusual attendance, when the peerage was not much more than half as numerous as at present; but the character of the audience differed essentially from that of the representative body. Here Lord Chesterfield's high-bred ease, delicate irony, fine humour, persuasive tones, and gracefully flowing periods, were appreciated; no unmannerly interruption or coarse freedom would have been endured; and his total want of those energetic bursts and impulsive movements, which are inseparable from the highest efforts of eloquence, was deemed rather a merit than a defect; for even Chatham, when he put forth his strength, has been known to ruffle their lordships' complacency, and was sometimes accused of compromising the dignity of their House. Lord Chesterfield particularly excelled in that graceful and urbane pleasantry which lightens up and relieves an argument, without appearing to trifle with the subject or ever degenerating into what he would term the vulgarity of a joke; and many of the best political as well as social repartees of his times are attributed to him.

It was nearly five years, however, after his accession to the peerage when he became one of the acknowledged leaders of the Upper House. George the First died in 1727, and it was then expected that Lord Chesterfield would reap the reward of his

constancy to the new king whilst heir-apparent. But, instead of being placed in high office at home, he was despatched on an embassy to the Hague. This post, whatever the intention of the Ministry in sending him there, was well fitted to his abilities, and he contrived to add considerably to his reputation by means of it. In 1729, Lord Townshend, having formed a plan for removing the Duke of Newcastle, advised Lord Chesterfield to wait on the King at Helvoet-Sluys on his return from Hanover, and desire permission to attend his Majesty to London on account of private business. This was done in the hope that the King might be won over by the charm of the Earl's conversation, and be prepared to appoint him in the Duke's place. The stratagem failed: Lord Townshend was forced to resign; and Lord Chesterfield went back to his embassy, after impressing Sir Robert Walpole so effectually with his entire innocence of the plot, and with the prudence of keeping well with him, as to obtain the place of High Steward and the Garter. His predecessor in the place, who was suspected of having made money by the patronage attached to it, gave him a list of the persons he had appointed, and desired they might be continued. "I have at present no thoughts of turning any one out," was the answer; "but if I alter my mind, it will only be in relation to those who have bought in."

Lord Chesterfield remained abroad till 1732, when he gave up his embassy. He had suffered both in health and fortune during his residence at the Hague, and it took him some months to gain strength enough to resume his parliamentary attendance, which now became unremitting. He at first supported the ministers, but was too fond of his own independence to fulfil the conditions which Sir Robert Walpole exacted from his adherents; and their friendship was consequently short-lived. On the introduction of the

famous Excise Bill, Lord Chesterfield denounced the scheme in the strongest terms, and his three brothers voted against it in the House of Commons. So high was the popular excitement, that when Queen Caroline consulted Lord Scarborough as to the possibility of carrying the bill, he is reported to have told her that he could answer for his regiment against the Pretender, but not against the opposers of the excise; upon which the Queen, with tears in her eyes, said, "Then we must drop it." The Ministry was in imminent danger, and was only saved by the tact of the Premier in yielding willow-like to the storm. It was not at such a season that he could afford to make a show of magnanimity. Lord Chesterfield was summarily dismissed from his office of Lord Steward, and the ministerial papers fell upon him with more than usual asperity. One writer in a leading government print went the length of insinuating, that reasons for the removal unconnected with politics might be disclosed, if it were not dangerous to speak such truths of a peer as might be deemed *scandalum magnatum*. Lord Chesterfield met and silenced this attack by a message to the anonymous writer, formally authorising him to say all he knew or what he pleased of him.

During the next two years Lord Chesterfield was one of the leaders of the opposition in the House of Lords, and left no means untried to effect the downfall of the minister who had insulted him. Dr. Maty tells a curious story in illustration of his zeal: —

"The late Lord R——, with many good qualities, and even learning and parts, had a strong desire of being thought skilful in physic, and was very expert in bleeding. Lord Chesterfield, who knew his foible, and on a particular occasion wished to have his vote, came to him one morning, and, after having con-

versed upon indifferent matters, complained of the headache, and desired his lordship to feel his pulse. It was found to beat high, and a hint of losing blood given. 'I have no objection; and, as I hear your lordship has a masterly hand, will you favour me with trying your lancet upon me? *Apropos*,' said Lord Chesterfield after the operation, 'do you go to the House to-day?' Lord R—— answered, 'I did not intend to go, not being sufficiently informed of the question which is to be debated; but you who have considered it, which side will you be of?' The Earl having gained his confidence, easily directed his judgment; he carried him to the House, and got him to vote as he pleased. He used afterwards to say, that none of his friends had done so much as he, having literally bled for the good of his country."

Though Lord Chesterfield contributed largely to the downfall of the Minister, he was left out of the new government, which lost considerably in public confidence for want of him. In "An Ode to a Great Number of Great Men, lately made," he is thus apostrophised in company with his friend, John Duke of Argyll: —

> "More changes, better times, this isle
> Demands. Oh, Chesterfield, Argyll!
> To bleeding Britain bring 'em;
> Unite all hearts, appease each storm;
> 'Tis yours such actions to perform,
> My pride shall be to sing 'em."

He continued in opposition, and on more than one occasion (as on commenting on the want of *conduct*, as contradistinguished from *behaviour*, at Dettingen) gave such strong personal offence to George II., that his exclusion from public employment might have proved permanent, could his services have been dispensed with. In 1744, however, the King was obliged to give up his favourite minister, Lord Carteret, and

to accept the coalition or "broad-bottom" party, at the head of which was Lord Chesterfield. The state of affairs abroad being just then the main difficulty, and the co-operation of the Dutch of vital importance, it was arranged that he should go first to Holland as Ambassador, and then to Ireland as Lord-Lieutenant; a plan in which the King acquiesced the more readily on account of its removing his supposed enemy from court. His Majesty stood out for some time against admitting the Earl into the cabinet, or granting him a personal interview, but was compelled to concede both points, and could only show his resentment by his manner, which he took care to make as ungracious as possible. The only words he uttered at the leave-taking audience, when the Earl requested to be honoured with his commands, were, "*You have received your instructions, my Lord.*"

The Earl succeeded tolerably well with his old friends their High Mightinesses; but we have no space to dwell upon this mission or its effects, and gladly hasten with him to Ireland, where he arrived towards the end of the year 1745 — a most trying period for a new Lord-Lieutenant, as the Catholics were hourly expected to take arms to co-operate with the Pretender. It is impossible to speak too highly of the wise and enlightened policy which he there adopted and enforced. It was immeasurably in advance of his age. Indeed, we should be puzzled to name any other English statesman, till we come to Burke, capable of conceiving such a scheme of government; much less of carrying it into effect with firmness, impartiality, and disinterestedness. All his more immediate predecessors had governed through "managers," *i. e.*, the heads of certain great Protestant families, who undertook to manage the two Houses, smooth down all difficulties, and make the viceregal office a pleasant sinecure; on condition of

being permitted to domineer over the rival party, divide the entire patronage, job the revenue, and anticipate the resources of the country, as they thought fit. So well understood and so effectually carried out was this arrangement, that we find the Duke of Shrewsbury giving as a reason for accepting the Lord-Lieutenancy, that it was a place where a man had business enough to hinder him from falling asleep, and not enough to keep him awake. It was not even regarded as affording sufficient scope for an independent mode of thinking or acting, to make it worth the acceptance of a man of Lord Chesterfield's political eminence; and some surprise was expressed at his eagerness to get appointed to it. Lord Marchmont records in his diary the reasons alleged in conversation by the Earl himself, which are all of a personal and not very elevated kind; but he may have thought a little dissimulation justifiable, and might have feared incurring ridicule or provoking opposition by explaining himself more fully. He certainly felt and expressed a full conviction of his own peculiar fitness for the post, and had it repeatedly in his thoughts at a long antecedent period. "One morning" (says Dr. Chenevix) "that I was with him, his Lordship was expressing how much he was concerned that I was so long without having better preferment, and told me, in his joking manner—'Well, I have just thought of a way in which I am sure you'll succeed with Sir Robert. Go and tell him from me, that I will accept the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland, and I am sure he will then procure you a good living from the Crown!'"

The first care of the new Lord-Lieutenant was to obviate the possibility of being impeded in his policy. He insisted on *carte blanche* in respect of every sort of patronage; and when, on his nominating his chaplain (Dr. Chenevix) for a bishopric, the King hesi-

tated, and begged he would look out for another candidate, he desired the Secretary of State to say, that, in that case, his Majesty must look out for another Lord-Lieutenant. He was equally peremptory with the Irish placemen who were regarded as pledged supporters of the Crown. The Master of the Rolls (the place was then a sinecure) having given some trouble in the House of Commons, he sent for him and said — "Master, you must do the King's business, or be turned out of your employment; and if you are, I shall not do as they do in England, for you shall never come in again as long as I have any power." This sounds harsh, but decided steps were necessary to show that he had made up his mind not to be thwarted; or he would have been crossed at every turn by the disappointed managers and their friends.

The office of Principal Secretary had usually been conferred on some clever, active, enterprising person, who did the whole work and monopolised the chief power (without the responsibility) of his Chief. Lord Chesterfield chose a Secretary, as a Mayor of the Palace in the early days of the French monarchy would have chosen a King; he chose a Secretary *fainéant*. The gentleman thus honoured was Mr. Lyddel, a Member of Parliament, and (to borrow his noble patron's words) a very genteel pretty young fellow, but not a man of business. He was thus addressed on his first visit, — "Sir, you will receive the emoluments of your place, but I will do the business myself, being determined to have no first minister." The next step was to conciliate good-will and inspire confidence. His Lordship's speech, on opening the Session, was admirably adapted for this purpose; whilst the grace, dignity, and apparent frankness with which it was delivered, had their full influence on a susceptible people like the Irish. The

impression thus made was much aided by the timely appearance of a supplemental Drapier's Letter, in which Swift's style was imitated with sufficient exactness to deceive the multitude. Dr. Maty thinks that Lord Chesterfield had a hand in it. The Dean certainly had not; for he was then dying, and unable to hail the arrival of the only Lord-Lieutenant equal to anything like an interchange of mind with him, to whom he would not have said as he said to Lord Carteret — "What, in God's name, do you do here? Get back to your own country, and send us our boobies again."

It is told in the "Swiftiana," that the Dean never could prevail on Lord Carteret to nominate him one of the trustees of the linen manufactory, or even a justice of peace. His Lordship always replied, "I am sure, Mr. Dean, you despise those feathers, and would not accept of them." The Dean answered, "No, my Lord, I do not, as I might be serviceable to the public in both capacities; but, as I would not be governed by your Excellency, nor job at the board, or suffer abuses to pass there, or at a quarter-session's assizes, I know that you will not indulge me for the good of this unhappy nation; but if I were a worthless Member of Parliament, or a bishop, and would vote for the court, and betray my country, then you would readily grant my request." Lord Carteret replied, with equal freedom and politeness, "What you say is literally true, and therefore you must excuse me."

We cannot describe Lord Chesterfield's administration better than by saying, that he would gladly have nominated the Dean to both: for he was a declared enemy to jobs of all kinds; he made it his principal study to find out and correct abuses; and, far from discountenancing patriots who were likely to give trouble, he anxiously sought out and put

himself into constant communication with all (like Bishop Berkeley and Mr. Prior) who had the good of the country at heart, and were qualified to give sound advice in advancing it. Two short extracts from his Letters to Mr. Prior will prove how just a view he took of the character and real wants of the Irish; and how singularly superior he showed himself to the cant and corruption of his day, which, alas! has hardly yet ceased to be the cant and corruption of our own.

"These (schemes for manufactures of glass, paper, &c.) are the sort of jobs that I wish people in Ireland would attend to with as much industry and care as they do to jobs of a very different nature. These honest arts would solidly increase their fortunes, and improve their estates upon the only true and permanent foundation, the public good. Leave us and your regular forces in Ireland to fight for you, think of your manufactures at least as much as of your militia, and be as much upon your guard against poverty as against Popery; take my word for it, you are in more danger of the former, than of the latter.

"I hope my friend, the Bishop of Meath, goes on prosperously with his charter-schools. I call them his; for I really think, that without his care and perseverance they would hardly have existed now. Though their operation is sure, yet, being slow, it is not suited to the Irish taste of the time present only; and I cannot help saying, that *except in your claret, which you are very solicitous should be two or three years old*, you think less of two or three years hence than any people under the sun.

. . . . . .

"I believe you will allow that a claret board, if there were one, would be much better attended than the linen board, unless when flax seed was to be distributed. I am sensible that I shall be reckoned a very shallow politician, for giving my attention to such trifling objects as the improvement of your lands, the extension of your manufactures, and the increase of your trade, which only tend to the advantages of the public; whereas an able Lord-Lieutenant ought to employ his thoughts in greater matters. He should think of jobs

for favourites, sops for enemies, managing parties, and engaging parliaments to vote away their own and their fellow subjects' liberties and properties. But these great arts of government, I confess, are above me, and people should not go out of their depth." I will modestly be content with wishing Ireland all the good that is possible, and with doing it all the good I can; and so weak am I, that I would much rather be distinguished and remembered by the name of the Irish Lord-Lieutenant, than by that of the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland."

His opinions on the cardinal question, What is to be done with the Roman Catholics? are explained in another well-known letter. "I came determined to proscribe no set of persons, and to be governed by none." He abided by these opinions throughout—turning a deaf ear to the remonstrances of the bigots, or parrying their remonstrances with a stroke of pleasantry. "Why, my lord," said the Sir Harcourt Lees of that day, "your own coachman is a Papist, and goes to mass every Sunday." "Does he, indeed!" replied the Lord-Lieutenant; "I will take good care that he does not drive me there." One morning early, the vice-treasurer, Mr. Gardner, a red-hot Orangeman, waited on him, and assured him on the best authority that the Papists in the province of Connaught were actually rising; upon which Lord Chesterfield took out his watch, and composedly observed, "It is nine o'clock, and certainly time for them to rise; I therefore believe your news to be true." All this time he was watching over the peace of the country with Argus eyes, and the slightest movement towards disaffection was observed. On hearing that a Roman Catholic proprietor in the neighbourhood of Dublin was an agent of the Pretender, he privately sent for him to the Castle. "Sir," (said Lord Chesterfield,) "I do not wish to inquire whether you have any particular employment

in this kingdom, but I know that you have a great interest among those of your persuasion. I have sent for you to exhort them to be peaceable and quiet. If they behave like faithful subjects, they shall be treated as such; but if they act in a different manner, I shall be worse to them than Cromwell."

Yet he cannot be accused of carrying the principle of toleration to an undue extent; for (according to Dr. Maty) he thought the only honest and effectual methods to be employed with regard to the Irish Roman Catholics, were good usage, supporting the charity schools, and adhering strictly to the Gavel Act — that act by which the estates of a Papist were to be divided equally among his nearest of kin, unless one of them should turn Protestant, in which case the convert was entitled to the whole! Was this carelessness, or politic compliance with a received prejudice, or genuine bigotry, to be set down among the follies of the wise? Sir Thomas More lent a hand to tighten the rack; Lord Bacon favoured judicial astrology; Sir Matthew Hale burnt witches; and the first Lord-Lieutenant who introduced the principles of justice and toleration into Ireland thought it right to bribe men over to the true faith by allowing them to rob their brothers and sisters of their patrimony! Yet with these startling examples of human fallibility before our eyes, we go on, day after day, unconscious of our errors, surprised at our weaknesses, loudly triumphing over the inconsistencies of others, and resorting to a thousand fallacies to palliate our own.

Upon leaving Ireland, he desired the Lord Chancellor, the Bishop of Elphin, and the Lord Chief Justice, to consider of any laws that might be for the advantage of the kingdom, and have them ready against his return. But in October 1746, he consented, much against his inclination, to exchange the Lord-Lieutenancy for the seals of Secretary of State.

"His project" (adds Lord Mahon, on the first Lord Holland's authority) "was to govern George the Second through Lady Yarmouth, as he once had hoped through Lady Suffolk." In this he failed, though his insinuating manners had their ordinary influence both with the lady and the King. It is said that he was once chosen, or volunteered, to conquer the King's repugnance to an important appointment. On his producing the commission, and mentioning the name, the King angrily refused, and said, *I would rather have the devil.* "With all my heart," replied the Earl; "I only beg leave to put your Majesty in mind, that the commission is addressed *to our right trusty and well beloved cousin.*" The King laughed, and said, *My Lord, do as you please.* Yet the awkward, shuffling, Duke of Newcastle managed to shuffle him out of his place, despite of all his tact; or at least made it impossible for him to keep it without a feeling of self-degradation; since he was not allowed to carry any one object, public or private, which he was known to have thoroughly at heart.

After trying for the fifth or sixth time, by way of testing his credit, to get a regiment for his cousin John Stanhope, he resigned in January, 1748. "My horse, my books, and my friends," (he writes to Mr. Dayrolles,) "will divide my time pretty equally. I shall not keep less company, but only better, for I shall choose it." He did not choose well at starting; for the very evening of his resignation he repaired to White's, and resumed his old habits of deep play. He was fond of clubs; and being once asked why he was never seen at routs or assemblies, he answered, that he never went to conventicles where there was an established church. For some years subsequently to his resignation he continued, as health permitted and until quite incapacitated from deafness, to take a prominent part in the proceedings of the House of Lords; and in 1751 he greatly distinguished himself

by his speech in bringing in the bill for the reform of the Calendar. This undertaking did him honour on many accounts; for the difficulties of detail were great, and the prejudices against it strong. He was seconded by Lord Macclesfield, the President of the Royal Society, and assisted by Mr. Bradley, the celebrated mathematician. Lord Mahon relates, that, three years afterwards, when Lord Macclesfield's son stood a contested election in Oxfordshire, one of the most vehement cries raised against him was, "Give us back the eleven days we have been robbed of." Several years later, when Mr. Bradley was dying of a lingering illness, the common people ascribed his sufferings to a judgment from Heaven for having taken part in that "impious undertaking."

In 1752 Lord Chesterfield's deafness became a fixed topic of complaint. "In spite of my strong hereditary right to deafness, how willingly would I part with it to any minister, to whom hearing is often disagreeable; or to any fine woman, to whom it is often dangerous!" In 1775:—"Retirement was my choice seven years ago; it is now become my necessary refuge. Public life and I are parted for ever."

One resource remained to him. He had always professed a strong attachment to literature, and had cultivated some of the lighter branches with success. His drawing-room verses (*vers de société*) were in vogue for a period; and to be in vogue for a period is as much as the writer of drawing-room verses (even such as Luttrell's or William Spencer's) can expect. It is a lucky chance, a thing on which to plume himself, if a couplet descends to posterity; and one of Lord Chesterfield's (from "Advice to a Lady in Autumn") is constantly quoted as a model of affected prettiness:—

"The dews of the evening most carefully shun,
Those tears of the sky for the loss of the sun."

An extempore couplet in a different style has been preserved by a foreigner: "Sir Thomas Robinson," (says M. Dutens,) "very tall and thin, one day challenged Lord Chesterfield to make some verses on him. Lord Chesterfield wrote immediately —

> "'Unlike my subject now shall be my song,
> It shall be witty, and it sha'n't be long.'"

But incomparably his best epigram is the famous one on seeing the full-length picture of Beau Nash, between the busts of Pope and Newton, in the pump-room at Bath.

> "This picture placed the busts between,
> Gives satire all its strength;
> Wisdom and Wit are little seen,
> But Folly at full length."

Perhaps his best *bon-mot* was on hearing of the marriage of a man of low family with the daughter of a lady whose way of life threw doubts on the paternity. He observed that nobody's son had married everybody's daughter. Had he been only a lord among wits, as Johnson termed him, we do not think Pope would have paid him the celebrated compliment —

> "Accept a miracle instead of wit,
> See two dull lines by Stanhope's pencil writ;"

Or have exclaimed even in verse —

> "How can I, Pulteney, Chesterfield forget,
> While Roman spirit charms, or Attic wit?"

It is remarkable that, although Dr. Maty expatiates largely on the familiar intercourse which Lord Chesterfield maintained with two generations of men of letters, he says nothing on the disputed question of the Earl's reception of Dr. Johnson; or of the papers in the "World" recommending the Dictionary; or of the indignant letter which they provoked. This

silence is ominous in a friendly biographer; but we incline to think that Mr. Croker has offered the true solution, namely, that no slight was intended, and that the lexicographer took fire without a cause. Lord Chesterfield had the misfortune to offend another man of genius (Smollett), who revenged himself in a less justifiable manner. The virtuoso Peer in "Peregrine Pickle" was said to be intended for the Earl.

He married, in 1733, Melusina de Schulemburg, the reputed daughter of George the First by the Duchess of Kendal. She contributed little either to his comfort or discomfort; and his opinion of matrimony, which must be supposed to be tinged by his own experience, was far from encouraging. "I have at least (he writes in 1763) done the best office that can be done for most married people; that is, I have fixed the separation between my brother and his wife, and the definitive treaty of peace will be proclaimed in about a fortnight." He had no family by the Countess, and all his parental interests were centred in his illegitimate son, Philip Stanhope; to whom the famous "Letters" are addressed.

The mother was called Mrs. Du Bouchet. She was a Frenchwoman of good birth, and the Earl always mentions her with respect. The son was born in 1732. Every branch and period of his education were minutely superintended by the father, who was resolved to make him a pattern of learning, eloquence, accomplishment, politeness, and grace. He turned out the precise opposite, except in the article of learning. Those who knew him best, describe him as a sensible, plain-mannered man, with a good deal of book knowledge, and with no pretension to elegance in look, gesture, or tone. He failed in the House of Commons, and, with all his father's pushing, had only just contrived to reach a fifth-rate diplomatic station (that of Envoy at Dresden) when he died. On his death in

1768, (five years before the Earl's,) it appeared that he had been privately married for some years, and had left a wife and two children to be provided for. This piece of dissimulation went a little beyond what it was his Lordship's wish to inculcate, but he behaved liberally to the widow, who, notwithstanding, took the unpardonable step of selling the whole of the "Letters" to a bookseller. They fetched the large price of 1575*l.* The first edition, dedicated to Lord North, was published in 1774, and three large impressions were sold within the year. Dr. Johnson accounts for this by saying, "It was not to be wondered that they had so great a sale, considering that they were the letters of a statesman, a wit, one who had been so much in the mouths of mankind, one long accustomed *virûm volitare per ora.*" But we think their real merit was quite sufficient to justify their reception; and we are convinced that the accidental circumstances connected with the collection have done it more harm than good upon the whole. Let us first examine the more popular and obvious objections to them.

It is said that they inculcate immorality, and on one point they do. The advice to form a *liaison* with a married woman by the way of apprenticeship in the art of pleasing, and the inquiries about *la petite Blot*, are far from edifying; but such passages must be read in connexion with the persons and the time. We must not run away with the notion that Lord Chesterfield thought it a becoming or an improving thing for a young man to invade the peace of a family, corrupt the mind of a young woman engaged in the due discharge of the domestic duties, and lead her into ruin and disgrace. At the period in question, the female leaders of fashion at Paris were all more or less addicted to gallantry. The enjoyment of a certain licence in this respect

was regarded as a prescriptive right; and a husband who should have endeavoured to interfere with it would have been regarded as a monster. "*Il lui faut nécessairement une passion,*" (says Lord Chesterfield's own protectress, addressing the company), "*et s'il ne m'en juge pas digne nous lui en chercherons quelque autre.*" It was in reference to this very state of things that Burke, a man of stern morals, laid down his celebrated axiom, that vice loses half its evil by losing all its grossness. Lord Chesterfield had been received on a familiar footing in the circle where such arrangements were a matter of course; he knew they were attended with neither risk nor scandal; and he knew, moreover, that, at Paris, a man of warm passions, in the heyday of youth, who did not devote himself to one of these ladies, would probably fall into worse hands, and form connexions ruinous to health, fortune, manners, and morals. He therefore acted like a man of the world, and chose the least of two evils; just as many a more virtuous father would recommend his son to fight a duel if imperatively required by the law of honour, though perfectly aware that he was recommending an action forbidden by the law of God. Lord Chesterfield may have done wrong; the advice may have been bad advice, particularly as regarded the person to whom it was addressed; but we protest against its being argued that he systematically disregarded virtue, or made light of principle, because he submitted to this compromise with expediency.

It is also objected to the "Letters" that they teach dissimulation; but this must not be understood as implying a low estimate of truth. It is impossible for the most pious or exemplary father to express himself more pointedly than the noble writer against lying: —

"There is nothing so delicate as your moral character,

and nothing which it is your interest so much to preserve pure. Should you be suspected of injustice, malignity, perfidy, lying, &c., all the parts and knowledge in the world will never procure you esteem, friendship, or respect. A strange concurrence of circumstances has sometimes raised very bad men to high stations; but they have been raised like criminals to a pillory, where their persons, and their crimes, by being more conspicuous, are only the more known, the more detested, and the more pelted and insulted. If, in any case whatsoever, affectation and ostentation are pardonable, it is in the case of morality; though, even there, I would not advise you to a pharisaical pomp of virtue. But I will recommend to you a most scrupulous tenderness for your moral character, and the utmost care not to say or do the least thing that may, ever so slightly, taint it. Show yourself, upon all occasions, the advocate, the friend, but not the bully of virtue. Colonel Chartres, whom you have certainly heard of, (who was, I believe, the most notorious blasted rascal in the world, and who had by all sorts of crimes amassed immense wealth), was so sensible of the disadvantage of a bad character, that I heard him once say, in his impudent and profligate manner, that, though he would not give one farthing for virtue, he would give ten thousand pounds for a character; because he should get a hundred thousand pounds by it; whereas he was so blasted that he had no longer an opportunity of cheating people. Is it possible, then, that an honest man would neglect what a wise rogue would purchase so dear?"

The only kind of dissimulation he teaches is that absolutely indispensable for a diplomatist, (Mr. Stanhope's intended profession,) and the concealment every prudent man practises. Burns has hit it off exactly in his "Epistle to a Young Friend:"—

"Aye free, aff han' your story tell,
When wi' a bosom crony;
But still keep something to yoursel'
Ye scarcely tell to ony.
Conceal yoursel' as weel's ye can
Frae critical dissection;
But keek thro' every other man,
Wi' sharpen'd sly inspection."

It is remarkable that, on the more delicate subject (immoral ties between the sexes), the peasant, looking at it in a mere worldly point of view, has pointed out a consequence which escaped the penetration of the peer: —

"The sacred lowe o' weel-placed love,
Luxuriantly indulge it;
But never tempt th' illicit rove,
Tho' naething should divulge it:
I waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard o' concealing;
But, oh! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling!"

Another ground of objection is the undue stress laid on manner, with the eternal recurrence to the Graces. Lord Mahon meets this by the known fact that Philip Stanhope was diligent — nay, eager — in the pursuit of solid knowledge, but careless to a culpable degree of both dress and address. There can be no doubt, however, that Lord Chesterfield was far too much impressed with the importance of superficial accomplishments, and too prone to undervalue the average information and understanding of society. At all events, we should not recommend any embryo Senator to suppose the following advice still applicable: —

"I was to bring in this bill, (for the Reform of the Calendar,) which was necessarily composed of law jargon and astronomical calculations, to both which I am an utter stranger. However, it was absolutely necessary to make the House of Lords think that I knew something of the matter, and also to make them believe that they knew something of it themselves, which they do not. For my own part, I could just as soon have talked Celtic or Sclavonian to them as astronomy, and they would have understood me full as well; so I resolved to do better than speak to the purpose, and to please instead of informing them. I gave them, therefore, only an historical account of calendars, from the Egyptian down to the Gregorian, amusing them now

and then with little episodes; but I was particularly attentive to the choice of my words, to the harmony and soundness of my periods, to my elocution, to my action. This succeeded, and ever will succeed: they thought I informed, because I pleased them; and many of them said that I had made the whole very clear to them, when, God knows, I had not even attempted it. Lord Macclesfield, who had the greatest share in framing the bill, and who is one of the greatest mathematicians and astronomers in Europe, spoke afterwards with infinite knowledge, and all the clearness that so intricate a matter would admit of; but as his words, his periods, and his utterance, were not near so good as mine, the preference was most unanimously, though most unjustly, given to me. This will ever be the case; every numerous assembly is a mob, let the individuals who compose it be what they will!

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"When you come into the House of Commons, if you imagine that speaking plain and unadorned sense and reason will do your business, you will find yourself most grossly mistaken. As a speaker, you will be ranked only according to your eloquence, and by no means according to your matter; everybody knows the matter almost alike, but few can adorn it.

. . . . . .

"I want to inculcate this known truth into you, which you seem by no means to be convinced of yet—that ornaments are at present your only objects. Weight without lustre is lead. You had better talk trifles elegantly to the most trifling woman, than coarse inelegant sense to the most solid man. You had better return a dropped fan genteelly, than give a thousand pounds awkwardly; and you had better refuse a favour gracefully than grant it clumsily. Manner is all in everything; it is by manner only that you can please, and consequently rise. All your Greek will never advance you from secretary to envoy, or from envoy to ambassador; but your address, your manner, your air, if good, very probably may. Marcel can be of much more use to you than Aristotle. I would, upon my word, much rather that you had Lord Bolingbroke's style and eloquence, in speaking and writing, than all the learning of the Academy of Sciences, the Royal Society, and the two Universities united."

Lord Chatham was a striking example of the power of manner, and of all that Demosthenes meant by *action* in oratory; but then his fire, his boldness, his splendid imagination, and idiomatic English, were sterling qualities of the highest order. Lord Mansfield, "the silver-tongued Murray," again, was all grace, ease, suavity, and mellifluence; his bare narrative was said to be worth any other man's argument; but this arose from the perfection of his logic, the excellence of his arrangement, and his thorough mastery of the subject in hand. Lord Chesterfield's mistake consists in not seeing, or not saying, that there must be a foundation for the superstructure. There may be a great deal of difference between times when the House of Commons was filled with men of birth and fortune, who took little part in real business, and times like the present, when it is principally composed of real and (*nolentes volentes*) hard-working representatives. But we doubt whether there ever was a time when plain unadorned good sense and reason, clearly expressed in appropriate language, would not (to borrow Lord Chesterfield's phrase) have done a man's business better than the most polished oration, tricked out with the choicest ornaments, where the obvious aim was less to convince or give information than to shine.

His Lordship does himself and his illustrious audience great injustice in what he says about his speech on the reform of the calendar. The truth is, he told them all it was necessary for them to know, and all any assembly but an assembly of *savans* could have understood, regarding the purpose of the Bill. It was not necessary to talk astronomy in order to prove the inconvenience of an erroneous calendar, or the propriety of adopting the best; and an historical account of calendars was the most judicious mode of disabusing the public, then clamouring against the

measure under a full conviction that the established calendar was a sacred thing, and no more a subject of legislative interference than the Decalogue. Lord Macclesfield's speech, subsequently printed, was addressed to the scientific world, and was equally useful in its way; but it ought to have been reserved for the chair of the Royal Society, which the noble speaker was afterwards called upon to fill.

The same turn of mind which colours the remarks on oratory, pervades the practical advice on many other subjects; although the peculiar tendencies of Mr. Stanhope make it difficult to say when Lord Chesterfield was expressing his real opinions on many of them. It is clear, however, that his Lordship fell into what strikes us to be a great error regarding the attention to be paid to natural character or genius, and the possibility or prudence of controlling it. He has an unlimited confidence in education; he thinks that the human mind and body may be trained to anything; that it is our own fault if we do not obtain the supreme control of our passions, the entire command of our faces, and the complete mastery of our limbs; that, if we will but take pains, we may possess most of the good qualities, and avoid all the bad; that we may be as learned, eloquent, graceful, and agreeable as we please; that any young man may take his degree in the art of pleasing as regularly as in the classics, and become in due course the darling of the women and the envy of the men; or, without the least reference to natural aptitude, may confidently set about making himself a courtier, a diplomatist, or an orator—in short, anything but a poet; which, possibly out of respect for the old maxim, is allowed to form an exception to the theory. Yet something may be done even with poets.—"If Shakspeare's genius had been cultivated, those beauties which we so justly admire would have been undis-

guised by those extravagancies and that nonsense with which they are frequently accompanied."

Acting on these principles, Lord Chesterfield devotes his best energies, during a series of years, to the task of qualifying young Stanhope to play the very part of all others for which he was palpably unfit. A heavy-looking, loutish lad, with good dispositions and a taste for solid acquirements, is to be manufactured into an easy, graceful man of fashion; to be endowed *invitâ Minervâ* with all the superficial accomplishments, and inoculated, in his own despite, with all the lighter vices; in the hope (too often vain) that they will polish without hardening, and be abandoned at the proper season for the graver cares and higher duties of society. Lord Chesterfield might just as well have told such a son to be six feet high as to be eloquent, to have a Roman nose as to be graceful, to write like Pope as to bow like the Duc de Richelieu; and we strongly suspect that the donkey playing lap-dog, was a fair type of the neophyte in the boudoir of *la petite Blot*, if indeed he ever got so far. The tenacity with which the Earl clung to his plan long after every one else had seen its hopelessness, is wonderful. The scales grew thicker and thicker, instead of dropping from his eyes; his son must and shall be a modern Alcibiades; all his old friends and former mistresses are adjured to make him one; and by way, we suppose, of putting the youth entirely at his ease, he is expressly told that a hundred eyes are watching him; and that, if he eventually falls short of the ideal standard, he may lay his account with finding all fatherly favour and affection at an end for ever.

The result is well known. The only one of his father's favourite accomplishments which young Stanhope acquired and improved upon, was dissimulation; and the skill with which he managed to conceal his

private marriage during so many years, shows that he was no mean proficient in it. But we do not found our judgment on the result. The scheme was absurd from the beginning: the whole theory is radically wrong. *E quovis ligno non fit Mercurius.* No parent should begin telling a boy to be this thing or that thing, before he sees what nature meant him for; that is, till the qualities, capabilities, or tendencies of the individual can be discriminated. It may be true that these are the effects of external circumstances, and not born with us; but they are commonly fixed at a period long antecedent to that at which education ever does or probably ever can begin.* Pope wrote excellent verses at fourteen. Lawrence painted beautifully when a mere boy. Madame de Staël was deep in the philosophy of politics at an age when an ordinary girl would have been dressing dolls. Nelson had made up his mind to be a hero before he was old enough to be a midshipman; and Napoleon was already at the head of armies when pelting snowballs at Brienne.

Although character is less strongly marked among the common herd, an acute observer will constantly discover traces of it. Go through any large school, and you will have no difficulty in picking out the boys most remarkable for neatness or slovenliness, cleverness or stupidity, excess of spirit or the lack of it; though you may not prove a match in discrimination for Smollett's schoolmaster, who, when some of his neighbours were boasting the superior decorum and

* "It is then a fact, that the early sequences to which we are accustomed form the primary habits, and that the primary habits are the fundamental character of the man. The consequence is most important; for it follows that as soon as the infant, or rather the embryo, begins to feel, the character begins to be formed; and that the habits which are then contracted are the most pervading and operative of all." (*Encyclopædia Britannica—Art. Education*, by the late James Mill.)

propriety of their young pupils, observed, "It may be all very true, but give me before them all my ain bubbly-nosed callant, with the stane in his pouch;" —words (adds Sir Walter Scott, for the benefit of southern readers) containing a faithful sketch of a negligent, unlucky, but spirited urchin, never without some mischievous prank in his head, and a stone in his pocket ready to execute it. Would any schooling in the world have made a staid, sober merchant, or a respectable Kirk Minister, of Smollett? The moral is obvious. Pursue the best system of general education until some marked tendency or peculiarity of genius begins to show itself, and then be regulated by *that*. Make the best of a bad matter, if it be a bad matter; but do not get restless, impatient, unreasonable, and contradictory, because, instead of the good quality you had set your heart upon, you find another good quality of a different description in your son. Years after young Stanhope's character was stereotyped, Lord Chesterfield writes thus:—

"Many fools (speaking of you) say to me, what! would you have him perfect? I answered, why not? What hurt would it do him or me? Oh, but that is impossible, say they! I reply, I am not sure of that: perfection in the abstract I admit to be unattainable; but what is commonly called perfection in a character, I maintain to be attainable; and not only that, but in every man's power. He has, continue they, a good head, a good heart, a good fund of knowledge, which will increase daily; what would you have more? Why, I would have everything more that can adorn and complete a character. Will it do his head, his heart, or his knowledge any harm, to have the utmost delicacy of manners, the most shining advantages of air and address, the most endearing attentions, and the most engaging graces? But as he is, say they, he is loved wherever he is known. I am very glad of it, say I; but I would have him be liked before he is known, and loved afterwards. I would have

him, by his first *abord* and address, make people wish to know him, and inclined to love him; he will save a great deal of time by it.

"Come, come, say they, (substituting, as is frequently done, assertion instead of argument,) depend upon it, he will do very well; and you have a great deal of reason to be satisfied with him. I hope and believe he will do well; but I would have him to do better than well. I am very well pleased with him; but I would be more — I would be proud of him. I would have him have lustre as well as weight. Did you ever know any body that reunited all these talents? Yes, I did: Lord Bolingbroke joined all the politeness, the manners, and the graces of a courtier, to the solidity of a statesman and to the learning of a pedant. He was *omnis homo;* and pray, what should hinder my boy from being so too, if he has, as I think he has, all the other qualifications that you allow him? Nothing can hinder him but neglect of, or inattention to, those objects, which his own good sense must tell him are of infinite consequence to him; and which, therefore, I will not suppose him capable of either neglecting or despising. This (to tell you the whole truth) is the result of a controversy that passed yesterday between Lady Hervey and myself, upon your subject, and almost in these very words."

Who can doubt that Lady Hervey had the best of the argument? and she might have pushed it still further. A man is not only more likely to succeed in life, but far more likely to please and inspire confidence among his intimates, by following the bent of his genius and letting his true character be seen;— always, of course, with due subordination to propriety. Eagerness, excitability, and vivacity, will be pardoned for the sake of earnestness, generosity, and truth. We not only esteem more, but actually like better, the friend who ruffles us with an occasional contradiction; and, let Lord Chesterfield say what he will about its not being gentlemanlike, a laugh is too good a thing to be sacrificed to the Graces, should they be cross and uncongenial enough to ask for it,—

which (if one of their truest worshippers may be regarded as their interpreter) they would not:—

> "While her laugh, full of mirth, without any control
> But the sweet one of gracefulness, rung from her soul;
> And where it most sparkled no glance could discover,
> In lip, cheek, or eye, for she brighten'd all over,
> Like any fair lake that the breeze is upon,
> When it breaks into dimples and laughs in the sun."

If a pretty woman and a lake may laugh, it seems hard that a gentleman should be restricted to a smile. But the prohibition is absolute:—"Laughter is easily restrained by a little reflection; but as it is generally connected with the idea of gaiety, people do not attend to its absurdity. I am neither of a melancholy nor a cynical disposition; and am as willing and as apt to be pleased as any body; but I am sure that, since I have had the full use of my reason, nobody has ever heard me laugh."

We suspect that his lordship himself would have done better if he *had* been heard to laugh;—if occasionally he had given way to a natural flow of spirits, and not impressed the public with the notion that everything he said or did was calculated. He was beyond all question the politest, best-bred, most insinuating man about the court; yet he was regularly outflanked and outmanœuvred by Sir Robert Walpole, who had the heartiest laugh in the kingdom, and by the Duke of Newcastle, who had the worst manners in the world. The solution is, that his Lordship played too fine a game, and *finessed* too much. While he was coaxing Mrs. Howard to take him up the back-stairs, Sir Robert Walpole had walked straight to the royal closet, and was telling Queen Caroline a coarse story; and the county member, who had left the Earl with feelings of awkwardness akin to those of Squire Western among the fine company at Lady Bellaston's, was soothed into self-

complacency and put completely at his ease by the bear-like hugs and cordial caresses of the Duke.* Lord Chesterfield's emphatic injunctions to his son, to take care and stand well with every human being about a petty German court, because even a valet or a waiting-maid might be a step on the ladder of preferment, reminds us of the interest on which Lieutenant Bowling calculated for getting Roderick Random the appointment of a surgeon's mate: — "The beadle of the Admiralty is my good friend, and he and one of the under-clerks are sworn brothers, and that under-clerk has a good deal to say with one of the upper-clerks, who, upon his recommendation, I hope will recommend my affair to the first secretary, and he again will speak to one of the lords in my behalf, so that you see I do not want friends to assist me on occasion."

Moreover, in matters of court-craft, or any matters touching the finer parts of conduct, precepts only serve to embarrass, and no experience avails us but our own. It may be true as regards other branches of knowledge, but it is not true as regards what is called the knowledge of life, that a dwarf standing on a giant's shoulders will see farther than the giant. On the contrary, the chances are, that the dwarf will grow giddy and get a tumble, or not be able to see at all. Can maxims give quickness and delicacy of perception, sensibility, fancy, grace of movement, or that fine composite quality called *tact?* If not, all exhortations to be winning, attractive, seductive, agreeable — *à fortiori*, to practise particular methods of riveting the attention or engaging the affections — are preposterous. The poet may talk of snatching a

* "When at last he came into his levée room, he accosted, hugged, embraced, and praised every body, with a seeming cordiality, but at the same time with an illiberal and degrading familiarity." (Lord Chesterfield's *Characters—Duke of Newcastle.*)

"grace beyond the reach of art;" but all graces are beyond the reach of art, except such art as is more than half-nature; and the Mentor in manners must content himself with telling the pupil what he is not to do, leaving what he is to do to his own sense of fitness and sagacity. It would have been a curious spectacle to watch young Stanhope repeating his conned lessons of politeness or gallantry—to hear him expatiating "unaffectedly and with a kind of *enjouement*" on the greatness of the House of Savoy to the courtiers at Turin—or to see him with *un ton du douceur*, and *des regards tendres*, endeavouring to win the favour of a Parisian coquette. We allude to such passages as these:—

"Make your court particularly, and show distinguished attentions to such men and women as are best at court, highest in the fashion and in the opinion of the public; speak advantageously of them behind their backs, in companies who you have reason to believe will tell them again. Express your admiration of the many great men that the House of Savoy has produced; observe that nature, instead of being exhausted by these efforts, seems to have redoubled them in the persons of the present King and the Duke of Savoy; wonder at this rate where it will end, and conclude that it must end in the government of all Europe. Say this likewise where it will probably be repeated; but say it unaffectedly, and the last especially with a kind of *enjouement.*" (Vol. i. p. 272.)

"Je vous conseille de débuter plutôt par Madame Dupin, qui a encore de la beauté plus qu'il n'en faut pour un jeune drôle comme vous; elle a aussi du monde, de l'esprit, de la délicatesse; son age ne lui laisse pas absolument le choix de ses amans, et je vous réponds qu'elle ne rejetteroit pas les offres de vos très-humbles services. Distinguez-la donc par vos attentions, et des regards tendres; et prenez les occasions favorables de lui dire à l'oreille que vous voudriez bien que l'amitié et l'estime fussent les seuls motifs de vos égards pour elle, mais que des sentimens bien plus tendres en sont les véritables sources. Que vous souffriez en les lui

déclarant, mais que vous souffriez encore plus en les lui cachant." (Vol. ii. p. 151.)

The really useful hints are such as these: —

"In order to judge of the inside of others, study your own; but men in general are very much alike; and though one has one prevailing passion, and another has another, yet their operations are much the same; and whatever engages, or disgusts, pleases or offends you in others, will, *mutatis mutandis*, engage, disgust, please, or offend others in you. Observe, with the utmost attention, all the operations of your own mind, the nature of your passions, and the various motives that determine your will; and you may, in a great degree, know all mankind. For instance, do you find yourself hurt and mortified when another makes you feel his superiority, and your own inferiority in knowledge, parts, rank, or fortune? You will certainly take great care not to make a person, whose good will, good word, interest, esteem, or friendship, you would gain, feel that superiority in you, in case you have it. If disagreeable insinuations, sly sneers, or repeated contradictions, tease and irritate you, would you use them where you wished to engage and please? Surely not; and I hope you wish to engage and please, almost universally. The temptation of saying a smart or witty thing, or *bon-mot*, and the malicious applause with which it is commonly received, has made people who can say them, and, still oftener, people who think they can, but cannot, and yet try, more enemies, and implacable ones too, than any one other thing that I know of. When such things, then, shall happen to be said at your expense, (as sometimes they certainly will,) reflect seriously upon the sentiments, uneasiness, anger, and resentment, which they excite in you; and consider whether it can be prudent, by the same means, to excite the same sentiments in others against you. It is a decided folly to lose a friend for a jest; but, in my mind, is not a much less degree of folly to make an enemy of an indifferent and neutral person for the sake of a *bon-mot*."

Lord Chesterfield's correspondence abounds in such passages, in which, be it observed, the style is as much entitled to admiration as the sense; and we

could turn to page after page on which La Rochfoucauld would stop to meditate, or which La Bruyère would hail as an improvement on his own. But it requires knowledge and experience to appreciate them; and, on the whole, we quite agree with Lord Mahon, that it is only persons whose principles are fixed and understandings matured, who can derive the full benefit, without risk of evil, from the Letters on Education. We recommend every parent who is bringing up a son for public life to study them; but we differ from Dr. Johnson as to the propriety of placing them in the hands of any young gentleman, even after taking out the immorality. A premature second-hand knowledge of mankind, with its common accompaniments of caution and self-seeking, would be a poor exchange for the frankness, openness, frolic spirits, and confiding generosity of youth. The remarks on women, thickly scattered and pointedly expressed, are alone sufficient to do an infinity of harm to readers who are not prepared by personal experience to weigh the sweetness, devotedness, and high principle of one half of the sex against the weakness or littleness of the other; and it must not be forgotten for a moment, that, if we never glow with enthusiasm, and only arrive at virtue through expediency, the highest and most improving lesson we can ever learn or teach is worldliness.

His Lordship's "Characters" have great value for the historian and the student of history. He had enjoyed excellent opportunities of observing what he described: he was an acute critic; and he obviously did his best to arrive at strict impartiality. But almost all who sat to him, consciously or unconsciously, for their portraits, had been his colleagues in office or his competitors for power. He cannot be regarded as a mere looker-on at the game of politics; indeed, his statements and speculations derive their chief weight

from his connexion with the principal players, and his peculiar cast of mind must have warped his judgment in his own despite. These celebrated sketches, therefore, should be read with distrust, and by the light of contemporary and often conflicting authority. Neither, considering that the Augustan age of English literature had preceded them by half a century, can their style be deemed irreproachable. In parts it is even slovenly, and might well justify a suspicion that some at least of these supposed likenesses had not received the last finish from his hand. The fragment entitled "Lord Bute, with an Account of his Administration" (first printed in Lord Mahon's edition of the "Letters"), is perhaps the best of Lord Chesterfield's essays in this line. His peculiar style of reflection and expression is particularly shown in such passages as these: —

"The scandalous chronicle says that he (Lord Bute) was a still greater favourite of the Princess of Wales. I will not, nor cannot decide upon that fact. It is certain, on the one hand, that there were many very strong indications of the tenderest connexion between them; but, on the other hand, when one considers how deceitful appearances often are in those affairs, the capriciousness and inconsistency of women, which make them often be unjustly suspected, and the improbability of knowing exactly what passes in *tête-à-têtes*, one is reduced to mere conjecture. Those who have been conversant in that sort of business, will be sensible of the truth of this reflection." . . . "The particulars of what passed at either or both of these audiences (Mr. Pitt's with the King), I am sure I do not know, though everybody else does to a tittle; but, in my opinion, those political *tête à-têtes*, like amorous ones, *à huis clos*, leave only room for conjectures, but none for certainty; and the performers only are able to tell—what, by the way, they never do tell, — the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

It is curious that Lord Chesterfield's self-knowledge should have failed to put him on his guard

against what he was constantly describing as the most insidious and effective means of warping the judgment and conciliating the favourable opinion of mankind. It was the brilliant eloquence, graceful address, and external accomplishments of Bolingbroke, not the depth of his philosophy, or the combined justness and comprehensiveness of his understanding, that led his noble admirer to describe him as "a most mortifying instance of the violence of human passions, and of the weakness of *the most improved and exalted human reason;*" as if, like Bacon, he were the wisest, brightest, and weakest (if not meanest) of mankind. Bolingbroke's political essays are still read for the sake of his style, which flows with a clear, rapid, abundant, and occasionally sparkling current; although it is far inferior to Dryden's in rich and varied ornament, to Addison's in idiomatic ease, and to Swift's in perspicuity; but his philosophical lucubrations are principally remembered by Dr. Johnson's rough denunciation of them and their author — "Sir, he was scoundrel and a coward — a scoundrel, for charging a blunderbuss against religion and morality; a coward, because he had not the resolution to fire it off himself, but left half-a-crown to a beggarly Scotchman (Mallett) to draw the trigger after his death."

There is a popular superstition about wills which has been known to influence men of acknowledged strength of mind; but, on the other hand, a will has frequently been selected as the depository of a posthumous jest or sarcasm. David Hume, in humorous reference to his cousin John Home's dislike of port, bequeathed the author of "Douglas" two dozen, on condition that he fairly drank it out himself; and Lord Chesterfield thus limits the devise of his property to his heir: — "In case my godson, Philip Stanhope, shall at any time hereinafter keep, or be

concerned in the keeping, of any race-horses or pack of hounds, or reside one night at Newmarket, that infamous seminary of iniquity and ill manners, during the course of the races there; or shall resort to the said races, or shall lose in any one day, at any game or bet whatsoever, the sum of 500*l.*; then, in any of the cases aforesaid, it is my express wish that he, my said godson, shall forfeit and pay out of my estate the sum of 5000*l.*, to and for the use of the dean and chapter of Westminster." This last sentence, adds Lord Mahon, contains a lively touch of satire. The Earl found, or believed that he found, the chapter of Westminster of that day exorbitant and grasping in their negotiations with him respecting the purchase of land for the building of Chesterfield House; and he declared that he now inserted their names in his will because he felt sure that, if the penalty should be incurred, they would not be remiss in claiming it.

Lord Chesterfield died on the 24th of March, 1773, in the 79th year of his age, and was succeeded in his title and estates by a distant kinsman, Philip Stanhope, the father of the present Earl. The concluding period of his life was far from happy, though he was apparently surrounded with all that should accompany old age. The son of his affections was no more, and had disappointed him; he derived no comfort from his wife; he had failed, according to his own notions, as a courtier; and his deafness had deprived him of his chief enjoyment in society. M. Suard, who saw him in 1769, says — "Je viens d'être presenté au Comte de Chesterfield, qui a été, comme vous savez, l'homme le plus aimable, le plus poli, le plus spirituel des trois royaumes; mais, hélas! *quantum mutatus ab illo!* Il est bien triste d'être sourd, nous dit-il, quand on aurait beaucoup de plaisir à écouter. Je ne suis pas aussi sage que mon ami le Président de

Montesquieu. *Je sais être aveugle*, m'a-t-il dit plusieurs fois, et moi je ne sais pas encore être sourd." He called his daily drive through the streets the rehearsal of his funeral, and used to say of Lord Tyrawley and himself: "Tyrawley and I have been dead these two years, but we don't choose to have it known."

The loss of sight was added to his other miseries; but he retained his memory and his politeness to his latest breath. Only half an hour before he died, Mr. Dayrolles came to see him, and the Earl had just strength enough to gasp out in a faint voice from his bed — "*Give Dayrolles a chair.*" "His good breeding," exclaimed Dr. Warren, the physician in attendance, "only quits him with his life!"

LORD MELBOURNE.

(From the Morning Chronicle, Nov. 27, 1841.)

The death of Lord Melbourne, although the last six years of his life were passed in retirement, has made a deep and melancholy impression upon many who were never honoured by his friendship, fascinated by his conversation, or gladdened by his laugh. It is very generally felt that another great illustration of a bygone period has been taken from us; and we admire and mourn over him, without pausing to ask, or caring to know, whether the prominent and ostensible parts he played on the stage of public life will justify our admiration, or account for our regret. Perhaps they will not. In this peculiar instance, the statesman is indissolubly blended with the man. It would be a crying injustice to his memory merely to number up the offices he filled, the speeches he made in this or that House, the measures he did or did not carry, and forget the influence of his frankness, manliness, sterling good sense, independent tone of thought, chivalrous honour, and consummate knowledge of his countrymen, when the throne relied on him as its chief supporter, or when agitation was on the point of becoming revolution at the bidding of colleagues less scrupulous as well as incalculably less capable of estimating the English character. In the remarks, therefore, which we are about to make on his life and career, it will be our principal object to convey an accurate impression of his personal

* The additions to this sketch consist principally of personal reminiscences. A more detailed account of Lord Melbourne's political career, from the able and spirited pen of Sir Henry Bulwer, appeared in the Edinburgh Review, Jan. 1849.

qualities, being convinced that this is the best method of enabling the public to understand and appreciate him.

He was born on the 18th of March, 1779, and educated at Eton, Glasgow, and Cambridge. Having an elder brother (Peniston, who died in 1805), he was originally intended for the bar, and actually assumed the wig and gown in 1804. He retained through life a vivid impression of his short forensic career, and a warm interest in the profession; although his opinion of one branch of it was neither flattering nor just. Speaking of solicitors, he wrote: "All that I have ever seen have all the same manner; hard, cold, incredulous, distrustful, sarcastic, and sneering. They are accustomed to be conversant with the worst part of human nature, and with the most discreditable transactions. They have so many falsehoods told them, that they place confidence in none."

His practical pursuit of the law was limited to a single attendance at the Lancashire Sessions in company with the late Lord Abinger, through whose recommendation he received a guinea brief; and he used to say that the first sight of his name upon this document gave him the highest feeling of triumphant satisfaction he ever experienced, very far transcending that which he enjoyed on being appointed Prime Minister. His marriage, the death of his elder brother, and his election for Leominster in the year following (1805), led to his speedy abandonment of the law as a profession, and during many years he apparently led a careless, indolent, *pococurante* life, divided between the gay circles of London and the House of Commons. But it is a great mistake to suppose that he was really idle, or that he was under-valued by his contemporaries, or that the prophecy of his future eminence, like most prophecies of the same description, was not made known till after its fulfilment.

The reputation of idleness might partly arise from the extraordinary quickness with which his mind gathered and garnered up whatever he deemed worthy or necessary to be known. He mastered a difficult subject in half the time which most men (and not ordinary men either) would have required for the purpose. Nor did he disdain any, the simplest sources of information. His favourite theory (Sir Walter Scott held the same) was, that there was no man so dull, and no book so trivial, but that something might be learned from them. He said a very excellent book might be made from a mere compilation of the valuable passages in valueless and stupid books. He read novels, and said that a well written novel, strictly adhering to nature, was in fact "possible memoirs." The want of nature, inconsistency, and exaggeration alone made them worthless. He quoted a humorous sentence from some novel criticising this failing, and saying that readers were kept in perpetual wonder at the inconsistency of the characters, "the tenderness of the bloodthirsty pirate, and the never dying revenge of the humble Christian."

As a young man he was already distinguished for grace of composition; and one of his essays, written while he was a student at Cambridge, was quoted by Fox in one of the very few speeches which he is said to have reduced to writing. In moving for a new writ for Tavistock, on the accession of Lord John Russell to the Dukedom of Bedford, Fox said: "I will conclude with applying to the present occasion a beautiful passage from the speech of a very young orator. It may be thought to savour too much of the sanguine views of youth to stand the test of a rigid philosophical inquiry, but it is at least cheering and consolatory; and that, in this instance, it may be exemplified is, I am confident, the sincere

wish of every man who hears me. 'Crime,' says he, 'is a curse only to the period in which it is successful; but virtue, whether fortunate or otherwise, blesses not only its own age, but remotest posterity, and is as beneficial by its example as by its immediate effect.'" *

Another statesman, not so likely to be influenced in this instance by private feelings, discerned the signs of future eminence many years before they became patent to the world. In the course of a debate on Lord John Russell's annual motion for Reform, in 1827, Mr. Hobhouse (now Lord Broughton) had made a powerful speech in favour of it, and a pause ensued, when a member rose at a considerable distance from the Speaker, and made a telling reply of about twenty minutes' duration, every sentence of which was received with acclamation by the House. A listener in the gallery (the present writer) turned round and asked a reporter (now a distinguished member of the Irish bar) who it was. "That," was the reply, "is William Lamb; and Lord Castlereagh used to say that he might become Prime Minister, if he would only shake off his carelessness and set about it."

His best speeches were delivered in the House of Lords, and some of them had merit of a high order. But sustained flights of eloquence were entirely out of his sphere; not certainly that he was deficient either in feeling or imagination; but he had a confirmed dislike to display of all sorts, and the rhetorical amplification of a topic was an art to which the peculiar cast of his understanding was instinctively opposed. His excellence consisted in telling home-truths, or expressing common-sense conclusions, in terse, familiar, and idiomatic language. Nor were his personal advantages, without influence in engaging the favour-

* The extract is from a *Prize Essay by the Hon. W. Lamb, read at Trinity College, Cambridge, in* 1798.

able attention of his hearers. His handsome and noble countenance, full of spirit and frankness; his melodious and resonant voice, and a peculiar manner of familiar and friendly appeal rather than of dictation, "speaking *to* men, and not *at* them," no doubt assisted the effect of his speeches. He was listened to with attention, and cheered with heartiness.

Sydney Smith, speaking of Lord Melbourne's supposed indolence, avows a belief that "our Viscount is somewhat of an impostor. Instead of being the ignorant man he pretends to be, before he meets the deputation of tallow chandlers in the morning, he sits up half the night talking with Thomas Young* about melting and skimming, and then, though he has acquired knowledge enough to work off a whole vat of prime Leicester tallow, he pretends next morning not to know the difference between a dip and a mould. I, moreover, believe him to be conscientiously alive to the good or evil that he is doing, and that his caution has more than once arrested the gigantic projects of the Lycurgus of the Lower House. I am sorry to hurt any man's feelings, and to brush away the magnificent fabric of levity and gaiety he has reared; but I accuse our Minister of honesty and diligence."

He not only read a great deal, but (for a man of lettered taste) had no marked aversion to blue-books, although he may not have turned to them by preference. Superior to and incapable of affectation, he thought no one should be expected to know everything, and when a subject came before him for the first time he was apt (thinking, as he said, that he could afford it) to reply in the same spirit as Dr. Johnson, when a lady asked him how he came to make a notorious blunder in his Dictionary—"Igno-

* Lord Melbourne's popular and esteemed private secretary.

rance, ma'am, sheer ignorance." But we suspect that Lord Melbourne was indulging in a little comic exaggeration, or a humorous expression of pettishness at being teased in behalf of men of science, if (according to a current story), on being pressed to give Mr. Faraday a pension, he pretended to mistake him for an astronomer. The extent and variety of his general and miscellaneous knowledge was beyond dispute. He was not only an excellent classical scholar, fond of translating into English verses passages from the Greek and Latin authors, but he was familiar with all the best English writers, including the old dramatists, and tolerably versed in the *belles lettres* of France and Italy. Controversial divinity and Church history were also among his favourite studies. He was particularly strong on the subject of the Gallican Church, and its famous resistance to Papal usurpation in 1682, when Bossuet played so prominent a part. He abounded and delighted in anecdotes, literary, legal, social, and political; and told his favourite stories with a felicity of expression which added to their zest. As a table companion, no wit, diner-out, or conversationist of our day was superior to him: —

> "Seen him I have, and in his happier hour
> Of social converse, ill-exchanged for power;
> Seen him, apart from all the venal tribe,
> Charm with a smile, and win without a bribe."

It is difficult, we frankly admit, to emancipate oneself at such times from the prestige of position or the influence of association. To attempt to forget that one's host has been the companion of princes and the first minister of two successive sovereigns, would be to act like Crambo (in "Martinus Scriblerus"), who said he could form an abstract idea of a lord mayor, apart from his gold chain and all the other ensigns of his dignity. But if such an abstraction were ever

possible, it would have been with Lord Melbourne. He was so thorough-bred, so essentially a gentleman in the most exalted meaning of the phrase, that the notion of social inferiority or superiority, as resulting from rank, never entered his mind; and the moment he began to talk he stepped down into the lists, and held his own on equal terms against all comers. Johnson would have described him as he describes Thurlow: "Sir, he is a fine fellow; he fairly puts his mind to yours." This is just what Lord Melbourne did. He fairly put his mind to yours; but if you had no mind to put or be put to, the sooner you got out of his way the better. He had been induced to ask a literary man to one of his small dinner parties, by hearing that he was well versed in Massinger, with which the gentleman had only a superficial acquaintance, but was ashamed to own it. "There, now," was Lord Melbourne's comment, "that fellow has been trying for half an hour to make me believe he knows a great deal of what he knows nothing. We won't have *him* again."

He preferred bold ready talkers when they had anything in them, and defended a lady whom somebody described as too loud and masculine, by saying, "That's what I like her for; she speaks out." On being told that a distinguished member of the Young England party (the late Lord Strangford) wished to be introduced to him, he exclaimed, with evident satisfaction: "What, do these young fellows want to know *me?* Bring him to dinner by all means." Lord Strangford's eager yet courteous manner, and rich flow of mind, exercised their ordinary charm; and the meeting proved equally agreeable to both.

The lighter sayings of Lord Melbourne which dwell upon the memory are remarkable rather for picturesque drollery of expression, comic frankness and suddenness, and sense of fun, than for what is

commonly called wit; as when he told an applicant for a subscription that he was not "a subscribing sort of fellow;" or described a distinguished member of his government as "too *cocksure* of everything;" or began a letter to an earl who wished to be made a marquis, "My dear——, how can you be such a d—d fool?" The absurd habit of swearing was almost universal in his younger days. Royal dukes, lord chancellors, chief justices, and Greek professors, were particularly zealous in condemning their own eyes, limbs, and souls, or those of their neighbours, to perdition; and as regards many of their most characteristic sayings, to omit the expletive would be to bring their authenticity into doubt.

He could hardly be brought to understand the prevalent eagerness for mere titles; and soon after a list of would-be baronets had been laid before him, he exclaimed,—"I did not know anybody cared any longer about these sorts of things. Now, I have a hold on the fools." When asked why he would not take the Garter, he said, he didn't want to bribe himself.

Eighteen or twenty years ago, a Right Honourable gentleman, who now holds a conspicuous position before the world, was known only by a clever novel and a calculated assumption of superiority. He had recently returned from the East, when he was asked to dinner to meet Lord Melbourne, who good-naturedly turned the conversation on the manners and customs of the countries recently visited by this gentleman. "Your Lordship," was his polite acknowledgment for this civility, "appears to have derived all your notions of Oriental matters from the Arabian Nights' Entertainments." "And a devilish good place to get them from," rejoined Lord Melbourne, rubbing his hands and laughing.

One morning at Brocket, Lord Melbourne received, and read aloud, a note asking permission for a neigh-

bour and "a friend" to fish in the park. "A friend! I don't like that anonymous friend, who is sure to turn out the greatest fisher in the country. I had rather be asked leave for an otter than an unnamed friend."

Pitt, according to Wilberforce, declared late in life that his long tenure of office had made him think better of mankind. Lord Melbourne, according to Sir Henry Bulwer, arrived at the same conclusion as Pitt. If this were so, they must each have started with a low estimate of their species. Burke (as reported by Boswell) only goes the length of saying that, in the course of his long experience, he had found more impulsive goodness, and less principle, than he had anticipated.

Lord Melbourne used to dwell on Horace Walpole's reflection: "To those who think, life is a comedy,—to those who feel, a tragedy." Talking of the effects of advancing years, he humorously repeated Lord Carhampton's comment on the Archbishop of Armagh's remark that "his legs carried him as well as when he was a young man." "Ay, my Lord, but not to the same places." With more dignity and gravity, but in the same sense, he was fond of quoting these lines, by a once popular author: —

> "Walk sober off,— before a sprightlier age
> Come tittering on, and shove you from the stage!"

Among the few specimens of his poetry preserved among his friends, is the paraphrase of four lines in Horace's "Epistle to Mæcenas:" —

> "'Tis late, and I must haste away,
> My usual hour of rest is near —
> And do you press me, youths, to stay —
> To stay and revel longer here?
>
> Then give me back the scorn of care
> Which spirits light in health allow,
> And give me back the dark brown hair
> Which curled upon my even brow.

And give me back the sportive jest
Which once could midnight hours beguile;
The life, that bounded in my breast,
And joyous youth's becoming smile:

And give me back the fervid soul
Which love inflamed with strange delight,
When erst I sorrow'd o'er the bowl
At Chloe's coy and wanton flight.

'Tis late, and I must haste away,
My usual hour of rest is near —
But give me these, and I will stay —
Will stay till noon and revel here!"

Lord Melbourne was the author of the "Epistle to the Editors of the Antijacobin," to which Canning replied, beginning thus: —

"Bard of the borrow'd lyre! to whom belong
The shreds and remnants of each hackney'd song:
Whose verse thy friends in vain for wit explore,
And count but *one good line* in eighty-four!"

The one good line was the second of this couplet: —

"By Morpeth's gait, important, proud, and big;
By Leveson Gower's crop-imitating wig."

His quiet manner, his terseness of expression, his self-possession, and his knowledge of mankind, enabled him to get over difficulties in his ministerial career which more than one of his colleagues would have converted into serious dangers. Thus, instead of obstructing the procession of The Trades Union in 1834, and thereby risking a tumult, he quietly watched it from the window of his official residence, and seeing no tendency towards a resort to force, let it pass.

The circumstances were these. They determined to awe the government by a demonstration of physical force, and announced that 100,000 men would march to the Home Office with a petition to the King; and 30,000 men actually did march through the streets in military array. Lord Melbourne declined to act on the advice pressed upon him from many quarters

to stop them. But when the leaders brought the petition to the door of the Home Office, he declined to receive it, and simply informed them, through the Under-Secretary, that they would be held responsible for any disorder that might ensue. Failing to frighten the minister, they became frightened themselves, and begged leave to go off with the petition by the back-door, so that their followers might not discover the rebuff they had received. As the mob could find no policemen or soldiers to quarrel with, they had nothing to do but to disperse at their leisure; and under this bold and quiet treatment the danger evaporated.

It was on this occasion that a few stragglers advanced towards the sentinel in Downing Street, shouting "Liberty or Death." "I don't know much about Liberty," said the man, making ready his piece; "but if you don't stand back, I'll soon show some of you what Death means."

Lord Melbourne's conduct on this occasion is one amongst many instances that could be adduced of his moral courage, temper, and self-command.

"Persons being sulky," he would say, "doesn't matter, when they take themselves off; you should take care to give people who are cross, time to come round. Peel's fault in that business when he failed to form a government (1839) was not giving the Queen time to come round."

Again:—"We should never give way to the conviction which, in discussion, is frequently forced upon men's minds, that something must be done. During the attacks on the Church after the Reform Bill, Sydney Smith was so alarmed that he cried out, 'Something must be done,' and wished for a Commission to be issued to reform the Church. Dr. Arnold felt that the measures he recommended in his pamphlet were injudicious and undesirable; but he

proposed them because he felt 'something must be done.' Newman, believing that it would not do to leave the Church system as it was, started the Anglo-Catholic theory, mainly because he also was convinced that 'something must be done.' Oh, a little tranquillity is a fine thing."

Such was the man on whom devolved the momentous duty of counselling and (in some sense) forming a young female sovereign at the outset of her reign; and since there is no denying that the object of his more than paternal solicitude has, in point of fact, become the beloved and enlightened ruler of a great empire, we can hardly err in attributing a fair share of the honour of such a result to her first Prime Minister. Not the least interesting of the anecdotes of her earlier reign, is that which records his reading to the young and inexperienced sovereign those verses from the First Book of Kings, where the youthful Solomon, being asked by God in a dream what gift he will desire, asks not "*long life, nor riches, nor the lives of his enemies,*" but "*an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad.*"

Nor must Lord Melbourne's disinterestedness, his perfect negation of self, be forgotten. Like his immediate successor (to whom the same flattering confidence was graciously accorded), he declined every mark of royal favour for himself, although a higher step in the Peerage and the Garter were more than once pressed upon him.

An incident, handed down by court tradition, may serve to illustrate the simplicity of his demeanour, and the playful affability that sometimes relaxes the enforced stiffness of etiquette. He had a trick of carrying papers as well as money in his breeches pockets. On pulling out a document to lay before Her Majesty, a quantity of silver coins followed it;

and in a moment the Prime Minister was seen chasing his shillings and sixpences round the room. At his next audience, the Queen formally presented him with a small paper parcel, saying that she had great pleasure in restoring a portion of his missing property. The parcel contained two shillings and a sixpence.

If Lord Melbourne had acted on his own judgment, he would not have resumed the government after his resignation in 1839, and he would thereby have avoided more than one compromise, which will be condemned by posterity. It were also to be wished that he had not assented to the Whig budget of 1841, after having so recently declared that any minister who tampered with the Corn Laws must be mad. On the breaking-up of a Cabinet dinner at his house in South Street, at which the proposed reduction of duties had been settled, he hurried to the door and called to the retreating guests, "Stop a minute, let's be all of one mind. Is it to lower the price of bread, or is it not?"—a point, by the way, on which the Political Economy Club was then far from unanimous.

His apology for retaining office in 1839 was his unwillingness to blight the prospects of his followers: "I counted up more than two hundred of my intimate acquaintance, or their families, who would have been half-ruined and heartbroken by my going out." We much prefer his vindication of the course he took in supporting parliamentary reform, which he had so long opposed. The substance of his defence was that the state of public opinion touching any given measure is the true test for deciding on its expediency, and that we must not risk a revolution for consistency's sake. So far we quite agree with him. We must no longer insist on self-sufficing, autocratic, or heaven-born ministers. We shrink

instinctively from the beau ideal of a statesman, whose greatness is to consist in his strength of will or his originality. An Alberoni, or a Richelieu, obliged to obtain majorities in the House of Commons, would be like Gulliver tied down by a multiplicity of threads —and wild work he would make of it if he broke through them. Lord Chatham, again, was invaluable for a War Minister. But the great measures to be projected, arranged, and then carried by an English statesman, almost all relate to internal legislation; the people must be prepared (in some instances, educated) for their reception; and we should be puzzled to name any comprehensive one that has been completed in our time until most of its early advocates were in their graves. Sheridan used to say that a measure proposed and carried within one generation, was quickly carried.

What, then, is the paramount excellence of a minister under our system of Government? Surely the power of determining the precise period when the people are ripe for any given change. The evils of procrastination in such a contingency are obvious enough, but it may be equally dangerous to anticipate; for, if a reaction should be the result, the progress of improvement might be indefinitely delayed. Suppose free-trade principles had been practically carried out twenty years ago, before men's minds were familiar with their real mode of working, —can any one doubt that the first unfavourable season at home, or the first check to international barter from adventitious causes abroad, might have compelled a reversal of that very commercial policy with which the nation is now perfectly satisfied?

There arose a very strong and sustained reaction against the Reform Bill, mainly owing to the indefensible machinery used in carrying it; and that reaction would have proved still more formidable had

not the means employed or proposed for inflaming one of the conflicting parties and intimidating the other, been steadily discountenanced by Lord Grey's Home Secretary. Then, how happens it that Lord Melbourne and the late Sir Robert Peel, each twice guilty of analogous inconsistencies, should have met with such widely different measures of justice?—the one rejected, denounced, and vilified by his party, the other retaining the unshaken confidence of *his?* The solution may possibly be found in their difference of manner. A dash of Lord Melbourne's fascinating indiscretion would have been invaluable to the more sedate and cautious statesman. If Sir Robert Peel had gone about in November, 1845, amongst the influential country gentlemen, and stated the difficulties he felt in acting up to their expectations, very few, if any, would have sanctioned a factious combination to run him down. On the other hand, Lord Melbourne's laxer and pleasanter mode of dealing with state affairs occasionally exposed him to grave censure for alleged want of earnestness. When, however, the Muse of History shall proceed to sum up his character, she may confidently inscribe his name on her tablets as a *man* who was the object of unfeigned esteem and enthusiastic admiration to his friends, and as a *statesman* of whose talents, straightforwardness, generosity, and refinement (whatever may be thought of his policy) the present and every succeeding generation of Englishmen must feel proud.

GENERAL VON RADOWITZ.

(From the Morning Chronicle, Dec. 31, 1853.)*

The recent death of General von Radowitz, at the age of fifty-six, after a prolonged illness, may well be deemed an event of no mean significance in the present crisis of Continental affairs; for his personal influence with his royal friend and master remained unshaken to the last, and the object which he had most thoroughly at heart was how to unite Germany under constitutional forms of government, and then to interpose her as an insurmountable barrier against the threatened encroachments of Northern despotism. There is no saying how much real and lasting good might have been effected through his instrumentality, had life and health been spared to him. Indeed, the same persons who, in 1850, spoke and wrote of him as a theorist or a dreamer, are now forced to acknowledge that, if the season he chose for his grand effort was unpropitious, and if the resources at his command were inadequate, still his views were noble, generous, comprehensive, and sound in the main — above all, that they were based on an accurate appreciation of the true interests of his countrymen, and tended to exalt and dignify the position of their common Fatherland.

His career must be regarded as strange and romantic, even in an age which has witnessed so many extraordinary reverses of fortune and of fame. Passing over his boyhood, we find him in 1812, when

* The date is material. We were then drifting into the war with Russia, and the King of Prussia was keeping all Europe in suspense by his vacillation.

he was between fifteen and sixteen years of age, a Westphalian officer of artillery; and he commanded a battery at the battle of Leipsic, where he was severely wounded and taken prisoner. He had already received the riband of the Legion of Honour for his services in the early part of that campaign. In times when kingdoms were annually made and unmade at the bidding of a successful soldier, to have changed sides or cockades in the universal *mêlée* can hardly be made the foundation of a serious charge against a young subaltern, who went with the crowd, and who had no individual motive in combating for or against the rulers to whom his allegiance may have been alternately transferred. It would be absurd, therefore, to draw any unfavourable inference from the fact that, after the dissolution of the kingdom of Westphalia, Radowitz entered the Hessian artillery, and served against France in the ensuing campaign. At the conclusion of the war, being then only eighteen, he was appointed first teacher of mathematics and the military art at Cassel; and in 1823 he had risen to the rank of captain, and was attached to the Electoral Court as military and mathematical teacher of the heir apparent. This was the turning point of his destiny; and his conduct at this period, under very trying circumstances, may be cited as an unanswerable proof of the fine sense of honour, the moral courage, and the lofty independence of character which never left him, and wanting which, no royal favourite ever yet preserved national confidence, or his own self esteem, or the elevating and inspiring hope of contributing to the well-being of his fellow-citizens and of mankind.

The incidents to which we allude may be briefly told. The Elector of Hesse, who was married to the sister of William III. of Prussia, peremptorily insisted that his mistress, Emily Ortlopp, on whom he

had bestowed the title of countess, should receive some mark of personal recognition or attention from his royal consort. The Electress consulted Radowitz, who boldly advised her not to submit to the degradation. One of his letters on this delicate topic fell into the Elector's hands, and he instantly became a marked and ruined man so long as he remained in Hesse. He repaired to Berlin, where the sacrifices he had incurred in the cause of truth and honour for a daughter of Prussia, naturally formed a very high recommendation. He was immediately indemnified, so far as military rank and employment were concerned, by receiving exact equivalents in the Prussian service for what he had lost; and — what was of incalculably higher moment, as giving him the required opportunity for the practical application of his vast treasures of thought and knowledge — he very soon became the most intimate and trusted friend of the heir apparent, the present King, of whose military and mathematical education he had the charge.

But Radowitz could hold his own against the most formidable rivals or antagonists, without any aid from the prestige of Court favour. His principles in government and legislation were Liberal-Conservative. Making, of course, ample allowance for the difference between German institutions and modes of thought and our own, we should say that the nearest parallel to his political views might be found in the rational, moderate, and thoughtful English creed which foolish people think to stigmatise by designating it as "Peelite." With a pardonable leaning towards what had stood the test of long experience, he refused to be bound by mere names, cries, or watchwords; and he was one of that sound and safe school of reformers who adopt unchecked discussion as their crucible, and enlightened public opinion as their test. When, under the influence of the French

Revolution of 1848, Prussia was hurrying beyond the bounds of regulated and tempered liberty, he threw up the whole of his appointments (including his embassy at Carlsruhe) rather than aid in the dangerous development and extension of democracy; and he soon afterwards took his seat in the Frankfort Parliament, as the foremost and most eminent champion of "Constitutionalism."

His appearance and position there are graphically sketched by one of the most violent of his opponents, the revolutionary poet, Alfred Meissner, whose youthful and innocent appearance, contrasted with his glorifications of the guillotine, had earned him the *sobriquet* of "The Blood-red Dove":—

"Three individualities stand prominently forward—the three capacities of the nobility, a *resumé* of its three great categories. I mean Herr von Radowitz, Herr von Vincke, and Prince Lichnowsky. Of these three, Herr von Radowitz incontestably ranks first. He is the head and the brain of the party of reactionary ideas, and which is audaciously continually arming against a movement that has already deprived it of so much, and would annihilate it if it took one step more in advance. But what else could be expected? The man who has devoted the energies of a whole life to the service of Absolutism, cannot in a day become the partisan of a Constitutional system. If Herr von Radowitz—the friend of Louis Philippe, the pupil of the Jesuits, who conspired with Guizot and Metternich for the suppression of the Swiss Confederacy, and afterwards endeavoured to excite Russia, Prussia, and Austria to a war against the French Republic—now enters the lists as a champion for Constitutionalism, I only the more believe in his dark machinations, and endeavour to trace them in the furrows on his brow and in the marked lines of his countenance. There he sits, as characteristic a head as ever stepped forth from the canvas of Velasquez, the very portrait of a warrior-monk. His face of a pale yellow hue, his grey hair, his jaundiced eye, his compressed lips concealed by a dark moustache, his sinister glance, always directed on the paper before him;—the whole

of his outward man has something imposing in it. He is no orator, yet all his speeches tell forcibly. On his seat he is silent as the grave;—he sits and broods, except when an important vote takes place; then he looks eagerly around him, and like a general gives the word to 'remain seated' or to 'rise,' as the case may be. They obey like soldiers."

A less prejudiced critic describes the General as not merely an effective but a popular speaker, "inasmuch as whilst he took part against the Poles, the Italians, and the further progress of the revolutionary movement, he never wounded the national feelings of the majority, and always strove to apply and realise the popular tendencies of the day." Meissner says that Radowitz was no orator; but this (as is clear from the context) must mean merely that eloquence was not his highest merit, for his powers of oratory were indubitably of a very high order. In April, 1849, he was recalled to Berlin, to be entrusted with the chief conduct of affairs, both at home and abroad, and he was named (by special ordinance) Lieutenant-General. On him devolved the task of explaining the new policy and the constitutional doctrines which the King of Prussia was anxious to carry out; and on the 25th of August, 1849, he fully developed these in the Second Prussian Chamber at Berlin. The following description of him on this occasion is also from the pen of an adversary, a distinguished member of the Extreme Right:—

"The heat was overpowering, the galleries filled to every corner, even the Court box; and in the places reserved for the corps diplomatique, the ambassadors of the highest rank stood upright against the wall, the perspiration pouring off their faces. A few unimportant generalities excited impatience, until Herr von Radowitz, dressed in a black tail-coat and black cravat, left his place behind that of Count Brandenburg, and advanced quietly amidst death-like silence to the tribune. His head is remarkably fine. His forehead

goes far back on the skull, between locks of stiff grey hair; his profile is of Grecian regularity, broken only by a prominent under lip, which is concealed, however, by his moustache. The general pallor of his countenance enhances the brilliancy of his dark brown eyes. His carriage is that of a man of sixty, and, to a painter's eye, does not respond to the head. The tone of his voice is deep and earnest, and lends itself easily to the required intonation of his discourse. His delivery was slow and distinct, aided by gesticulations of the right arm, which never outstepped the limits of dignity. The orator had a small manuscript before him, which served as a prompter to his astonishing memory, without ever interrupting the smooth flow of his language; every word was clear and precise, without hesitation or correction; never too much nor too little, but always to the point, for the impression he desired to make. At the conclusion of the speech the applause knew no bounds; the enthusiasm was such as the Hungarians felt when Maria Theresa presented herself to them. The *moriamur pro tribus nostris regibus* was written upon every countenance. If the orator could have commanded a hearing amidst the clapping of 2000 hands, he might have demanded anything, millions, from the Chamber, —it would have been immediately accorded. The Right and the Left, the Centre and the First Chamber applauded together. The galleries clapped lustily; it was only in the diplomatic ranks that we observed hands which knew well how to applaud Fanny Cerito abstain from giving any sign of applause. *Chacun à son goût.*"

The half-mocking tone of this description rather confirms than weakens it; and it might be corroborated by a host of contemporary witnesses. He is no common man of whom adversaries write in this fashion.

From this period until the memorable struggle with Austria in November, 1850,—which ended in his final retirement from the political arena, — he filled, as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, the same relative position which was occupied by Chatham with the Duke of Newcastle for his nominal chief. To the

world at large, and in the eyes of history, Radowitz was virtually Prime Minister of Prussia during the whole of that exciting epoch, when the two mighty rivals were on the point of bringing their claims to the arbitration of a pitched battle, with the rest of Europe for spectators, and the dictatorship of Germany for the prize.

We have no space for particulars, but it may be as well to state that it was the menacing attitude of Russia in the background, not fear of the results of a single-handed conflict with Austria, that induced Prussia to recede; and we may add that Lord Palmerston, in the course which he pursued on this occasion, instead of sustaining his mythical continental reputation, and tilting Quixot-like against the giants (or windmills) of absolutism, — appears to have been exclusively guided by broad considerations of expediency, and to have acted with coolness, caution, and sagacity.

It will be remembered that the people of Hesse Cassel, from the highest to the lowest, from the professor to the peasant, had risen as one man against their government, and expelled their minister, the main source of their discontent. Austria sided with the oppressors, and Prussia with the oppressed. Constitutionalism and absolutism were on the point of coming to a fair stand-up fight, when the Cabinet of Berlin lost heart: the war party was outvoted, and the Hessians were compelled to take back their detested Hassenphlug. Immediately after his defeat and retirement, Radowitz came to England, and a considerable sensation was produced by his reception at Windsor Castle, which he visited two or three times by special invitation. He told the writer that all he needed in the crisis was the moral support of England. Even an expression of opinion, or a sign of sympathy, would have sufficed; but no

sign was given, and he fell. That the English nation wished well to his cause, was notorious; but surely if Lord Palmerston had intervened officially in the affairs of Central Germany, he would have justified the strongest censure that ever was directed against the "turbulent and aggressive" policy imputed to him.

In 1826, General von Radowitz was married to Marie, *née* Comtesse de Voss,—a beautiful, amiable, and accomplished woman, who survives him. He was the idol of his family, and of his private circle, which was of the most intellectual kind, and the conversations which took place in it are supposed to have laid the foundation of the most remarkable of his publications,—"*Gespräcbeaus der Gegenwart über Staat und Kirche*" (*Conversations arising out of the Present on State and Church*).

In this work the leading sects or parties into which the political and religious speculators of Germany were divided, are each represented. Arneburg, an officer of noble birth, a strictly orthodox Lutheran, with strongly pronounced *pietistic* (the word is untranslatable) and legitimist sympathies, is divided between his religious feelings and his admiration for the middle ages. Detlev, his brother, is a democrat and pantheist, with a touch of Socialism. Grusius, a rich manufacturer, stands for the Liberal *bourgeoisie*. Oeder, the man of the old bureaucracy and "practical" statesmanship, is a religious "*indifferent*." Waldheim (who commonly speaks the opinions of the author) is a Catholic deeply attached to the Church, and inclining to the historical school in government and legislation. Such a work could not be appreciated without an intimate acquaintance with terms and notions to which we have hardly anything analogous in England. All who are capable of estimating it agree that it is a production mani-

festing both depth and precision of thought, elevated feelings, great command of language, and an almost prophetic sagacity. It was first given to the public in 1846, but it contains passages which read as if they had been written in 1850, so exactly do they indicate the tendencies and foreshadow the events which have come to light or occurred since February, 1848.

Although he did not speak English, the impression left by his conversational powers, in the literary, fashionable, and political world of London, was highly favourable. His knowledge seemed universal, and his memory inexhaustible. In him, a masculine strength of understanding was blended with feminine delicacy of perception and tenderness of feeling; and his flow of earnest thought was alternately enlivened by fancy or softened by sentiment, in a manner to exercise as marked an influence on the higher order of women as on men.

His miscellaneous writings are numerous, and his literary pursuits having been invidiously mentioned to account for his assumed failure in state-craft, it was replied, in a brief biographical notice of him which appeared in our columns on January 2, 1851, that Metternich, although guiltless of a book, had been equally unfortunate towards the end of his career, and that it is no easy task to decide how far the mishaps of a Guizot, or a Radowitz, are attributable to circumstances which they could neither control nor foresee. In a letter addressed to the writer the day following, Radowitz, then in London, writes thus: —

"Ces réflexions avec lesquelles vous finissez votre article, sont à très peu près les mêmes qui se sont présentés à moi lors de la revue retrospective que j'ai faite le dernier jour de l'an. J'ai dû en faire une application toute personnelle. Triste du mal

que je prévois, impuissant pour le bien que je désire, je voudrais finir par un peu de repos une vie que je n'ai point épargnée, mais que je n'ai pu rendre utile. *Ces temps actuels sont difficiles — je dois dire plus, ils sont impossibles.*"

It is much to be feared that the train of feeling to which he thus gave vent was something more than the transient emanation of a melancholy hour — that, too frequently indulged, it weighed upon his spirits, undermined his strength, and rendered him powerless to bear up against the illness which terminated in his death. Yet how true are the concluding reflections, and how precisely applicable to the times in which we are still living, on the eve of a "happy new year!" Bring all the wisest statesmen of Europe together in one room, and is there one of them who would not be tempted to exclaim, with Radowitz, against the difficulty, if not impossibility, of any safe, honourable, and speedy extrication from the present world-wide entanglement of cross purposes and crooked answers, — this mischievous product of criminal ambition, misplaced confidence, factious intrigue, blind prejudice, and blundering diplomacy? Then what is the obvious moral? Surely, that candour and forbearance are more needed than carping ingenuity — that it is better to provide effectively for the future than to dwell invidiously upon the past.

We must not close this brief notice of a very remarkable man without alluding to one quality, in which he shone preeminent: the fervid, simple, unwavering piety, which guided his life and cheered his death-bed. So much doubt exists as to the degree of religious faith common in superior men of the world, that it is cheering to point to this instance among many, that the duties and struggles of active life are not adverse to the maintenance of

such a faith in its purest form. "God's will be done"—which so often seems merely the cry of submissive grief or conscious debility—of a broken heart or a flickering intellect—was the motto of Radowitz's life; and, could we venture to lift the holy veil that shadows the picture of his last hours alone with a devoted wife, we might repeat here how, alluding to the constant exercise of his fine intellect in "search of deep philosophy" and all earthly science, and his consciousness of superiority in those respects, he nevertheless declared that all was "nothing in comparison of religion, of the faith in Christ Jesus," in which he died.

THE COUNTESS HAHN-HAHN.

(From the Edinburgh Review, Jan., 1844.)

1. *Aus der Gesellschaft, Novelle.* Von (From Society, a Novel, by) Ida, Gräfin (Countess) Hahn-Hahn. 8vo. Berlin: 1838.
2. *Der Rechte,* (The Right One.) Von Ida, Gräfin Hahn-Hahn. 8vo. Berlin: 1839.
3. *Gräfin Faustine.* Von Ida, Gräfin Hahn-Hahn. 8vo. Berlin: 1840.
4. *Ulrich.* Von Ida, Gräfin Hahn-Hahn. 2 vols. 8vo. Berlin: 1841.
5. *Sigismund Forster.* Von Ida, Gräfin Hahn-Hahn. 8vo. Berlin: 1843.
6. *Cecil.* Von Ida, Gräfin Hahn-Hahn. 2 vols. 8vo. Berlin: 1843.

It is a remarkable fact, that, out of the fourteen or fifteen thousand living authors of Germany, not one (if we except Tieck, who belongs to the last generation) has obtained anything approaching to an European reputation, or given decided proofs of originality, as a novelist. Rich in historians, fertile in critics, abounding in metaphysicians, and overflowing with thinkers, or gentlemen who think that they are thinking, the whole Confederation has proved, during the last quarter of a century, utterly unable to produce a prose writer of fiction, who does not turn out, on nice inspection, to be an imitator;—to have belonged, from his or her first conception, to some one of the established schools, historical, metaphysical, or romantic; and kept constantly though unconsciously in mind, some one of the great masters or master-

pieces — in nine cases out of ten Scott or Goethe — "Wilhelm Meister" or "Waverley." At last, however, we have found one who draws exclusively on her own resources, rises proudly superior to authority, holds on her course in entire disregard or forgetfulness as well of the examples set by her predecessors as of the rules laid down by her contemporaries; and, as may be guessed, is utterly unlike all or any of her countrymen or countrywomen, who, to our knowledge, have hitherto risked themselves in print.

Ida, Countess Hahn-Hahn, is, both by birth and marriage, a member of the Mecklenburg family of Hahn, which begins with a distinguished founder in the dark ages, and boasts nine or ten centuries of unsullied nobility. When very young, she married her cousin, but was divorced soon afterwards, on her own application, on the ground of alleged infidelity on the part of the husband. She has lived a good deal in most of the German capitals — mixing chiefly with the class to which she naturally belongs; and she has visited most of the principal countries of Europe, in company with the attached friend to whom "Faustine" is dedicated. She has one child, a girl of fifteen or sixteen. She herself is about five-and-thirty, or a little more. Two or three years ago she had the misfortune to lose an eye, through (as she asserts in her "Reisebriefe") the ignorance or inattention of the operator. The leading events of her life are mentioned, because her style of thought is palpably modified by them; and because her individuality, so to speak, is constantly presented to the mind of the reader, though without the ordinary repelling effect of egotism.

Madame Hahn-Hahn is already the author of six novels, three books of travels, and a little dramatic poem which she is pleased to call an "Arabesque." It is our present purpose to consider her exclusively

as a novelist; but we must begin by apologising for the term.

Towards the end of her second work, she complains that the word *novelle* was added by the publisher, without her leave, to the title-page of her first. "As I write no novels, I do not choose to usurp the title, and the book must try to make its way without [illegible] will not be valued the less on that account, for I do not make the disclaimer out of modesty." If this be so, we are unable to guess why she disclaims at all; for the only peculiarity which distinguishes such a book as "Aus der Gesellschaft," or "Der Rechte," from the ordinary run of novels (always excepting their intrinsic merit), is the comparative carelessness of the writer regarding plot, which is hardly a subject of self-congratulation. But we will not quarrel with the lady about a word; there strikes us to be as much action (unity of action, too) and as studied, careful, complete development of character in her best fictions, as in many whose title to be called novels no one ever dreamed of questioning; but undoubtedly it will be most favourable to her, and equally agreeable to us, to consider them as a series of studies on the feelings; or a succession of characters and situations illustrative of the great problems of domestic life — its pains, pleasures, mutability, discontent — the waywardness of the affections, the inconstancy of the imagination, the insufficiency of all things human to satisfy the eternal cravings of the heart. Considered in this point of view, it would be difficult to form an undue estimate of their merit; so well chosen, and at the same time so varied, are both scenes and actors. In one of her single volume books, there are seldom less than four or five sets of people making each other happy or miserable, yet no two of them bring about the proposed result in the same manner. As

for heroes and heroines; she can hardly be said to have any; and she has so little turn for melodramatic display, that it is only when the story is drawing to a conclusion, and some show of unity is imperatively required, that she places her men and women in marked contrast, or attempts to throw them into groups. They talk more than they act, and feel more than they talk; for her strength consists in tracing the influence of time, place, and circumstance upon the heart. She delights to combat the notion that the affections can be subjected to the will, and is never more at home than when expounding the *rationale* of change, or suggesting excuses for inconstancy.

The scenes are laid in the higher orders of society, and almost all her characters, with the exception of a stray artist or so, are taken from them. We have heard her blamed on this account, and accused of undue fastidiousness; but there strikes us to be no foundation for the charge. It was quite natural that she should take the materials immediately within her reach, especially when these were best adapted to her main purpose — the frank and full exposure of the moral maladies peculiar to persons of her own rank, with a view to the patient endurance of them; for she holds out small prospect of a cure. She moves too easily and habitually amongst her "*Hoch-Wohlgebornen*" (High-Wellborn) to produce even a momentary impression resembling that left by the authors of our "silver-fork" school; and although she is evidently attached to aristocratical institutions, we have discovered no traces of what can fairly be designated as illiberality. The native nobility of mind is never refused a place alongside of the conventional nobility of birth; genius is mentioned as the universal leveller: knowledge, refinement, and self-respect, as the best titles to consideration in society. In fact, her tone

and manner, as well as her selection and treatment of subjects, are precisely those of a high-bred gentlewoman; and it is by no means an insignificant, though incidental, recommendation of her books, that we collect from them a sufficient knowledge of the habits, tastes, feelings, and opinions of the German nobility and gentry, conveyed in the mode least open to suspicion—*i. e.* unconsciously. We have a theory, that no one who enters a country for the express purpose of describing it, sees things in their proper natural relation to each other; and as most of the authors of what are called "fashionable novels" never get beyond the precincts, they are still more liable to fall into exaggerations and mistakes than travellers.

Another characteristic of this writer is, that she never wanders beyond the circle of private life into questions of government or legislation. This alone strikingly, and in our opinion not disadvantageously, distinguishes her from a writer who has not unfrequently been named with her. Madame Hahn-Hahn has been called the "George Sand" of Germany; and that there are a few superficial points of analogy between her and Madame Dudevant, is undeniable. Both have written novels and travels; both have been unlucky in marriage: but here the parallel must stop. When we open their books and look a little below the surface, we find ample materials for contrast, and none whatever for comparison.

To bring the two within the same category, we must begin by laying entirely out of the account Madame Dudevant's later productions, those of the mystical religious character; in many of which, mixed up with much that is obscure, wild, or faulty, it is impossible to help recognising a wonderful grasp of thought, combined with poetic power of a very high order. The parallel, if there is to be one, must rest

on such books as "Indiana," "Jacques," and "Lelia." Now these are, for the most part, open or covert attacks on laws, rules, and observances of all sorts. When people are unhappy, it is rarely, according to her, that they have themselves to thank for it. It is some unequal law which depresses the poor — some artificial code of manners and morals which embarrasses the rich. All our suffering proceeds from causes which a more enlightened public opinion would remove; and even when individual hearts, minds, and dispositions are in fault, their aberrations are attributed to the corruptions or false notions of society.

We bear willing testimony to the comprehensive views, the warm sympathies, the hatred of wrong, the thirst for truth, which distinguish all Madame Dudevant's books: nor are we prepared to say that she is an immoral writer. Her ends are noble, though the means may be ill chosen; she raises and elevates, if she occasionally misleads; and she never loses sight of the best foundation of all morals — the importance of self-sacrifice, the necessity of mutual forbearance, the healing, soothing, peace-promoting virtue of charity. Still it is a dangerous doctrine to propound, that much of what the world calls crime may be nothing more than mistake or misfortune; and though prolonged and patient suffering exercises a strengthening, purifying effect upon the soul, it requires more of the esoteric philosophy than falls to the lot of many, to appreciate Lelia's meaning, when she silences her young admirer's scruples regarding her friend Trenmor by the remark — "*Ecoutez, jeune homme, il a subi cinq ans de travaux forcés.*".

There is nothing at all resembling this in Madame Hahn-Hahn. Her motto rather seems to be:

> "How small, of all that human hearts endure,
> That part which laws or kings can cause or cure."

She feels as keenly as any man or woman of genius that ever lived, the frequent injustice of opinion; and at rare intervals something like a despairing cry breaks from her, at the wearing, wasting monotony of life. But her settled conviction is, that the world is a place of trial, an arena on which the best and wisest are playing at cross-purposes; man never is, but always to be, blest. In youth we are unhappy, because we cannot anticipate the future; in more advanced age, because we cannot renovate the past; and it is a part of the inscrutable design of Providence, that reality should fall short of hope, and enjoyment end in satiety. She does not say that our hearts are desperately wicked, but she says that they are desperately fickle; instead of telling us to obey their capricious impulses, she expressly tells us to bridle them; and she inculcates the due discharge of the domestic duties as the best sedative for restlessness. Even the weak wavering Ulrich, the slave of passion, is not allowed the ordinary indulgence of attributing his loss of peace to the laws of marriage or the regulations of society.

"You have told me (says Ulrich, in a letter to a friend) that you have been acquainted with passion, but tell me, have you pursued it — or rather, has it pursued you — to the complete disorganisation or paralysis of your being? Tell me, is it my unlucky peculiarity, or that of all men of sensibility, to be encircled and crushed by that boa? There are moments when I rise against myself, when I would fain shake off, at any cost, a yoke which my weakness has imposed upon me; for others shake it off. I am now in such a moment. My whole course of conduct appears to me unworthy and unmanly. I ask myself: Are there, then, no honours and duties, no merits and distinctions, no friends, male or female, in the world, with whom life may be passed suitably, reasonably, and, so to speak, right pleasantly? Have I not my beautiful Malans on the beautiful Rhine, sufficient

for all the wants of domestic, as well as all the refinements of social life, full of recollections of my father, who loved and adorned it, because he had there spent many a happy year with my mother. Am I not myself married to a pretty, amiable woman, who requires nothing but a little attention on my part to become the best of wives and the tenderest of mothers? Is it not inconceivable perversity, or criminal blindness, to possess so many elements of happiness, and not to be able so to order and govern them, as to mould them into a firm, sure, complete happiness? Ought I not to collect myself once for all? take my heart to task, call in my wishes from their restless aimless wanderings, change my unattainable dreams of bliss for the attainable peaceful enjoyments of reality, and instantly return from the plains of the Don to the Rheingau and my home? Home, my friend — is not that a sweet name for a sweeter thing? Does not the foundation and keystone of all human exertion lie within the narrow limits of domesticity — in its kindly, cordial, contented, and yet widely-branching influence? Every other loosens the bonds between us and our fellows, because it isolates us in our egotism: let the love of glory, the thirst of knowledge, the pursuit of art, or even the loftiest ambition, boast as they may of their philanthropy, of their brotherhood with the human race, and their exertions in its cause. As for all those theoretical systems of philanthropy, which profess to establish amity with Hottentots and Esquimaux, and bring about cordiality between nations, while the founder hates and despises the individual men in his immediate neighbourhood, and harbours envy and jealousy within his own breast, I make no great account of them. The practical one of St. Vincent de Paul, who took off the chains of the galley slaves, and bore them in their stead — that I can conceive, and the Saint was lucky in having hit upon it. I possess no such capability of self-sacrifice, and very few do. Since, however, no thorough improvement of character is possible, unless our charity and compassion, our patience and readiness for self-sacrifice, are tried, — for this very reason a circle has been marked out for us, in which we may practise them for our own happiness, and, therefore, willingly and easily; namely, the family circle. Yes, God has ordered man's destiny easily and pleasingly! he places each of us

before the entrance of a magic circle, full of such power and such beauty, that egotism itself loses its ugly form within it, since it is there changed into a feeling which belongs to the *mine*, and no longer to the *I*. There is full contentment; reward in the sacrifice; blessing for the exertion; consolation hand-in-hand with care, and refreshment alongside of labour. Instead, now, of taking possession of this happiness without more ado, we look round, and consider whom we shall introduce into our paradise, and there may be one amongst ten thousand who does not demand from God an Eve after his own special ordering. See now, this demand thrusts us far away from the portal. Everything assumes a different form; the kindly circle is changed into a prison, where intolerable burdens and miseries await us — into a rowing bench, on which two wretches are chained down, whose sufferings are turned into downright martyrdom by their compelled proximity. And all this because we never, or too late, meet with the individual woman whom we should wish to make our wife! Had God given us nothing but sound sense and understanding, this would never come to pass; and every sensible, pretty woman, would answer our expectations, and satisfy us. But, to our sorrow, we have also a heart; and that is not so easily satisfied. It is too tender, or too wilful — enough, it despises the simple domestic fare, and hungers for ambrosia. In this everlasting hunger it grows faint. Faintness of heart paralyses the whole machinery of existence. To this am I come. Do you understand this? I do not mean, have you thought about it, but have you lived it?"*

A woman, a weak one too, suffering from the same malady, writes thus:

"What states of mind and soul I have lived through! with what demons I have wrestled! what a languishing thirst for happiness at first, and what an aversion for the joys of the world at last came over me. Oh, there are no words for it! Yet who among us has not wrestled and suffered? who among us has not gone through the illusion-destroying, spirit-crushing process? who among us has not seen his altars tottering, and his idol tumbling from its throne? But, somewhere or other,

* Vol. II. p. 12.

there is a green oasis for us all! If it does not bloom in the present, it dawns in the future, or smiles mournfully from the past. He who is saddened by his recollections, throws himself boldly into the arms of hope or into the bewitching enjoyment of the moment; he who suffers from the world, takes refuge in a loving heart or in his own; he who cannot luxuriate in feeling, seeks relief in action; he who cannot find a resting point that satisfies him in things external, has a wide unbounded domain bestowed upon him by thought. Existence is an ever-blooming Eden for none; for most, it is a soil which they must laboriously build upon, a soil scattered over with wastes and rocks; yet the dry waste is sprinkled with sweet flowers, moss and ivy are entwined about the rock, and the fir-tree springs from its crevices. Vegetation plants itself everywhere, and developes life—*except in drift-sand.*"

As for our minor miseries, these also depend much upon ourselves; and a habit of self-examination, she thinks, will effectually remove most of them. When you are fretful, uneasy, desponding, without any assignable cause—or inclined to think yourself neglected by your friends, pause a moment and consider whether they have not as much reason to complain of you as you of them; whether you are not suffering from some chronic malady, moral or physical; whether you are not approximating to the state of Louis XIV. at that period of his life when Madame Maintenon complained, that she had to amuse a King who was no longer *amusable.*

Again, according to Madame Hahn-Hahn's theory, although it may not be in every one's power to be contented or constant, it is in every one's power to be true; and she has no mercy for any sort of trifling, mental sophistication, or deceit—

> "This, above all, to thine own self be true;
> And it must follow, as the light the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man."

Her severity in this respect may be estimated from a short dialogue between the young artist Polydor

and the Countess Schönholm, his patroness, in "Aus der Gesellschaft:"

"'But you will write to me often and much, won't you?'

"'That is as it may be: I can promise nothing beforehand, because I do not know whether I shall be able to keep my word.'

"'But you must know what you will do?'

"'No, for I do not know what may happen to me.'

"'It is, therefore, quite possible for you to forget me altogether in a new object or a new idea?'

"'No; but you may certainly be thrown into the background.'

"'Countess, you are dreadfully candid.'

"'If you would but speak the truth, you feel exactly the same.'

"'Possibly; but I do not say it to you.'

"'I, however, say it to you designedly, that you might not, young as you are, imagine yourself to be dearer to me than you are.'

"'Countess, why do you say such hard things to me?'

"'Because you are a man, my poor Polydor; consequently a little vain and confident. In every relation between men and women, I deem it best for both sides to know, as precisely and clearly as possible, what they are to one another; otherwise misunderstandings capable of giving great pain may easily occur.'"

We have said that allowances are made for passion; but we must limit the proposition. The indulgence extends no further than to the unconscious growth or progress of feeling; the moment ladies or gentlemen become aware of a guilty wish or forbidden liking, they must fly. No paltering with conscience, no tampering with duty, no references to Plato or his creed; judgment of instant separation is pronounced without appeal. Otto (in "Aus der Gesellschaft") gives up Ilda. Margaret (in "Ulrich") flies Ulrich. Olden (in "Der Rechte") quits Vincenza for ever at her bidding. Renata (in "Cecil") nobly resists temptation. In

the few instances in which the bounds of duty are transgressed, the transgression is not defended; and the character (Faustine, for example) is described as an exceptionable one. It should be added, that Madame Hahn-Hahn's respect for inconstancy originates in a conviction that the highest natures—generally the most imaginative and impressible—are incapacitated, by the law of their being, from resting satisfied with what they possess; or resisting the attractions of any new and unknown object, if it happens to bear a closer resemblance to the ideal image of grace and beauty which is ever moving before them with a glory round its head. Moreover, their minds and hearts are constantly advancing; and the same amount of excellence, or the same sort of sympathy, will no more suffice for them in their more advanced stages, than the pursuits of boyhood will satisfy the man. Still, this tendency does not prevent them from throwing themselves, heart and soul, into their first grand passion; and an adorer, after Madame Hahn-Hahn's own heart, would be more likely to be thought too devoted than the contrary. The required sentiment, seasoned with a spice of Wertherism, is embodied in some spirited verses printed in her first novel*, and we have therefore attempted a translation of them. It is as literal as we can make it; but it is only by a lucky chance that a succession of simple heartfelt expressions or idiomatic felicities in one language are ever capable of exact representation in another.

"If you'll be my own,
Then list to me now,
My love shall be shown
Long as fate will allow.
The truth, you shall hear it,
Whatever it be,
And if you can't bear it,
You do not love me.

* Aus der Gesellschaft, p. 189.

"Thorn-tangled and wild,
And o'er rocks, is my path;
Oh! am I the child
Of God's favour or wrath?
At times I feel riven —
So shatter'd, so drear —
And then, as if heaven
Were opening to cheer.

"The lark trills her note
Unseen and on high;
The eagle will float
Alone in the sky.
Just so is my being;
I pour out my lay
Unseen and unseeing,
And hover, as they.

"Right up tow'rds the sun
I soar, tempest-tost;
And bliss has been won
Where peace has been lost.
Yet I grow calm, and care
Dies away at its birth,
As I bathe in the air
That's untainted by earth.

"Let the war-cries of life
Ring loud as they will,
Through the thick of the strife,
You must follow me still.
The shame you must bear,
Ay, make it your own;
And the crown you must wear
As if born to a throne.

"If your soul is thus steel'd,
Self-sustained, self-possess'd,
Unable to yield,
And yet able to rest;
Come to me — no shrinking —
I'll live on for you —
But if you stay thinking
One moment — Adieu."

We have gradually wandered from our parallel; but we must return to it, if only to mention one more difference, the most decided of the whole. Some gifted and many common-place women, feeling or thinking themselves fitted for a wider field of exertion

than is ordinarily held compatible with the appropriate virtues of their sex, have murmured, or railed in good set terms, at the alleged injustice of the restraints imposed on it; and Madame Dudevant, not satisfied with assuming a masculine name, and displaying (it must be owned) a masculine strength of understanding, has occasionally adopted the garb, together with a few of the distinctive habits, of the stronger sex. The *statuette* by which she is best known throughout Europe, represents her standing in an easy, independent attitude, attired in pantaloons and a frock coat. Madame Hahn-Hahn, on the contrary, is thoroughly feminine in all her tastes, habits, feelings, and modes of thought — in her weakness as well as in her strength; nor does she appear to have made up her mind that women are qualified to contend for the greater prizes in art, science, and philosophy. For example: —

"'Without pleasure in that which has been undertaken in good earnest, without devotion to it, satisfaction in it, triumph with it — nothing great was ever yet accomplished; and what is the quintessence of these feelings except inspiration? What else is the pulse of their life? Inspiration is the electric shock which runs through the chain of existence; and history shows that it is only received by men.'

"'Only by men?' interrupted Faustine — 'and the prophetesses of the Hebrews! and the Roman matrons who laughed at death! and the priestesses of the Germanic tribes! and the heroines of Saragossa!'

"'I except the mere impulse. When a woman's heart is touched, when it is moved by love — be it for an individual, for her country, or for her God — then the electric spark is communicated, and the fire of inspiration flames up. But even then, woman desires no more than to suffer and die for what she loves. No woman was ever excited to the creating, controlling, world-lifting point: no, never; that is, never by inspiration. By intrigue, by caprice — likely enough; she amuses herself with these occasionally. But it never yet entered the mind of woman to make her lover immortal, like

Petrarch's Laura and Dante's Beatrice. They do not even master art; much less science. That woman remains to be born who is capable of interesting herself for an abstract idea, to the extent of enduring chains and torture for its sake, like Galileo with his *e pur si muove.* We cannot so much as form a notion of a female Socrates.'" (*Faustine,* p. 149.)

There is no getting over the fact that no woman has ever attained the highest rank in any branch of art, science, or literature; — not even in music or painting, where neither masculine education nor physical strength can be deemed essential. There are no female Raphaels or Michael Angelos; no female Handels, Beethovens, or Mozarts. Madame Hahn-Hahn does not even maintain the superiority of her sex in matters of the heart.

"'Under ordinary circumstances,' said Faustine, 'we may be superior to men in tact and fineness of perception; but when a man loves — and this happens oftener than women are willing to allow — he enfolds the beloved one like a sensitive plant, and feels sooner, stronger, every dawning emotion, every shade of feeling, every growing thorn of disagreement, every swelling bud of happiness. But then he must love in good earnest'" (p. 177).

Enough has been said to distinguish Madame Hahn-Hahn from her celebrated contemporary; and the course of the parallel has naturally led us to state the leading qualities of her style. We may now, therefore, proceed to a more detailed examination of her books; but it is only fair to say, that their great charm consists in the succession of skilful touches by which characters are developed, and in the incidental topics or allusions by which attention is kept up. She seems to have followed the advice given by Mr. Merryman to the poet in the prologue to "Faust." "Do but grasp into the thick of human life! Every one lives it — to not many is it known — and seize it

where you will, it is interesting." She scatters about so many traits of sensibility, so many poetic fancies, so much suggestive speculation on the subjects which come home to every one who has mixed in society; that, though few of them, taken individually, may be very profound or original, a highly pleasing impression is produced — somewhat resembling that (to borrow one of her own similes) produced by the milky way upon the eye. "The collective mass forms a luminous streak, every single minute point of which is a star; but no Orion, no Sirius, overpoweringly attracts the view." She is just the sort of writer who must be read, and read carefully by a qualified reader, to be appreciated.

"Gräfin Faustine," the third on our list, is the book in which Madame Hahn-Hahn first put forth her full strength, and displayed her peculiar qualities. It is marked by more unity of purpose and compactness of plot, than "Aus der Gesellschaft" or "Der Rechte;" which, short as they are, are more than half made up of episodical narratives or detached scenes. It has also been said, and is currently believed, that "Gräfin Faustine," and Ida, Gräfin Hahn-Hahn, are one and the same person.

The opening-scene is laid at Dresden, on the terrace overlooking the river, where several young men are lounging and chatting, one fine afternoon in June. It was too early for the female promenaders.

"It was consequently the more remarkable that a woman, apparently belonging to the higher class, was seated on a bench, with her back towards the pavilion, undisturbed by the talking of the men, or the noise of the children. But it struck no one. She must therefore be somebody whom every one know and no one minded. She was sketching diligently. A servant stood statue-like by her side, holding a parasol, so that neither a dazzling ray of light, nor the quivering shade of the leaves, might fall on the hand, eye, or paper, of his lady. Her large dark eye flew with keen quick

glances hither and thither between the drawing and the landscape; and the delicate hand, relieved from the glove for the sake of greater fineness of touch, and careless of exposure to the air, skilfully followed the glance. She was completely buried in her occupation."

The group of loungers were joined by one of their companions, and a stranger, Count Mario Mengen, who had just been appointed Secretary of Embassy at Dresden—a distinguished-looking man in the prime of life.

"'Why, there is actually the Countess Faustine sketching!' suddenly exclaimed the new comer, Feldern.

"'But where is Andlau, then?' said another: 'she has been nearly an hour here alone. I wonder that he consents to it.'

"'That he endures it!' exclaimed another.

"'Come, come,' said the ever kind Feldern, 'they are not chained to one another.'

"'Don't you believe, Feldern, that they are privately married?'

"'No: for they might be openly married, if they chose.'"

Whilst the conversation was proceeding, the lady rose and moved slowly away, greeting the men of her acquaintance with the air of a Queen as she went by.

"'Who is the lady?' inquired Count Mengen, eagerly.

"'The very Countess Faustine we were speaking about.'

"'A stranger?'

"'Yes, but settled here some years.'

"'Married?'

"'Has been'—'Perhaps'—'Not known'—'A widow'—resounded on all sides.

"Mengen looked round. 'You are joking.'

"'Honour bright! we are speaking the simple truth.'

"'The truest and simplest,' said Feldern, 'is, notwithstanding, when we say that Countess Faustine Obernau is a widow.'"

The scene changes to Faustine's house, where

Baron Andlau is discovered, seated on an ottoman, in a fever of impatience for her return.

"'Why does she not come?' said he to himself: 'has any thing happened to her? Why did I not go with her? my headache would not have been worse. Why, above all, did I let her go out at this hour of the day!' He took his hat, and was going out to meet her, when he heard her step on the staircase. He sprang up and opened the door for her. The darkened room seemed to grow light as she entered. Faustine threw her bonnet on one table, her drawing-book on another, herself on a sofa, and exclaimed—

"'My dear Anastasius, that will be a charming sketch! but I am tired—tired to death.'

"'Why do you over-exert yourself so? Is it absolutely necessary that the sketch should have so hot a sun-glare?'

"'Absolutely necessary!' said she. 'Besides, I have already rested, and this very evening you must go over to Neustadt with me. I must learn exactly how the river and the churches look by moonlight.'"

He hands her a letter containing an invitation from her sister-in-law:

"'Well,' said Faustine, 'a day or two sooner or later can't matter to you. Let us start the day after to-morrow. Together as far as Coburg; then you to Kissingen, I to Oberwalldorf; at the beginning of July I will join you—and then for Belgium.'

"Andlau made no objection. He was content with every thing that was agreeable to her, and as she commonly cared for nothing and nobody in the world but him, this must be reckoned an extraordinary merit in him; for most people are most dissatisfied when the greatest interest is taken in them. She had sat down beside him on the ottoman. He touched her forehead lightly with his lips, and looked down upon her with an indescribable expression of tenderness, devotion, and joy. Faustine alone had ever seen him smile from an inward sense of pleasure; for to her he was every thing she wanted, and at every moment when she wanted him — father or friend, teacher or lover, encouraging or warning, watching over or caressing — and she leant upon him as her visible

providence. Her discursive fancy was kept within limits by his clearness—her restless excitability by his calmness. 'As those slaves in the East,' she would say laughingly, 'wear, as a sign of their condition, only a little gold chain upon the wrist, which looks like an ornament; just so is your love an ornament, but still a chain.'

"'Which you are obliged to carry to prevent your being blown about by all the winds of heaven,' replied Andlau.

"'And to be sure I deserve no better; for I have a genuine slave nature, and love most where I am most tyrannised over.'"

With every wish to be sparing of our extracts, we are obliged to bear in mind that a train must be laid where an effect is to be produced: it is essential that the characters and position of Andlau and Faustine should be understood; and a few descriptive touches are still necessary.

"Almost all women were fond of Faustine, for she never came into competition with them. She grudged them neither their triumphs, nor their fine clothes, nor their adorers, and was content to have none of these. True, she threw the most beautiful and brilliant women into the shade, yet in such a manner that it was not felt. The beautiful said—'She has a great deal of mind, but she is certainly not handsome.' The clever—'She has not much sense, but she is very lovely.' None of them compared themselves with her, just as fine garden flowers would probably not like to be compared to a wild Alpine plant. A savage said once, on seeing a picture of an angel, 'He is of my race.' Civilised people no longer possess this divine instinct.

Some may think this figure overwrought, but let it not be condemned hastily. Does it not gracefully indicate the too prevalent inclination in society to put down or repudiate what exceeds the ordinary measure, or makes the least claim, however well-founded, to superiority? When the claim has been made good, the tone is inviting enough, but the first impulse is to repel. It is something to fix the attention

of contemporaries — to say nothing of the chances with posterity — and one would think that ordinary people would gladly claim kindred with genius; yet, not long since, it was by no means unusual to hear a common-place, mere walking talking gentleman, sneeringly inform the company that he was not *literary* — as if any human being could fancy that he was.

"Pindar's fine remark," says Coleridge, "respecting the different effects of music on different characters, holds equally true of genius; as many as are not delighted by it, are disturbed, perplexed, irritated." Goethe makes the same complaint in his "Farbenlehre:" "a noble deed is attributed to selfishness, an heroic action to vanity, an undeniable poetic production to a state of delirium: nay, what is still stranger, every thing of the highest excellence that comes forth — every thing most worthy of remark that occurs, is, so long as it is barely possible, denied."

The ordinary run of men, it is added, did not take to her: she was not sufficiently tolerant of their complimentary commonplaces, or indulgent to their self-love.

"Elderly men liked her best; probably because she was more friendly towards them — partly out of respect for age, partly because she maintained that she ran less danger — not of falling in love — but of being suspected of doing so, which might prove inconvenient and annoying. She was without fortune, without consideration, without connexions; yet such was the influence of her personal qualities, that the world silently recognised her connexion with Baron Andlau as a legal one, and, to excuse itself for this indulgence, supposed a private marriage."

This kind of toleration is not unusual in Germany —not merely in Vienna, where a certain degree of laxity has always existed, but in Berlin, where the standard of propriety is more rigidly maintained.

They separate, and Faustine goes to her sister's, where nothing remarkable occurs, except that a wild young man, Clement Wallsdorf, a connexion of the family, falls desperately in love with her, despite of marked discouragement. On her return, she rushes to meet Andlau with an eagerness which makes him tremble.

"She was bewitchingly beautiful in her storms of sensibility, and indeed all human beings are most beautiful when they are in their peculiar element; but he loved her so much, that he felt less pleasure in seeing her in her full beauty, than fear lest the frequent recurrence of such moments should consume the sources of life.

"'But why are you weeping, Ini?' asked Andlau; 'before you were with me you had something like a reason — but now ——?'

"'Pedant!' exclaimed she, 'must I then be happy by rule? When rejoicings, kissing, caresses, are not enough, tears and fault-finding must take their turn.'"

Andlau's mother dies, and another separation becomes necessary. They part as usual with vows of eternal constancy:

"'Now, let the most important word be the last. Ini—Forget me not.'

"'That is a worn-out jest, Anastasius.'

"'No jest, Ini. You do not know yet how you can forget all.'

"'Oh, all, dearest—all; but not you!' She flung her arms round him in a burst of agony, and when he tore himself away, and the door closed upon him, she felt that her guardian angel had abandoned her; she sank upon one knee, exclaiming—'He is gone! he is gone! Oh, my God, abide with me now!'"

His return is postponed from week to week, and she remains for nearly two months in a state of loneliness, going out very seldom, and receiving few visitors. At the end of this time, her young admirer,

Clement, arrives at Dresden; and she begins to cultivate society in order to avoid a frequent *tête-à-tête* with him. At the house of a friend she becomes acquainted with Count Mario Mengen, the stranger who had been so much struck by her on the terrace. He is clever, well-informed, and endowed with a certain independence of thought and bearing, which harmonises with her own. His conversation soon becomes her chief resource; the day is incomplete without him, and Andlau's absence is less painfully felt.

The passages in which the growth of their mutual liking is traced, are amongst the best in the book; but we must hasten to the period when it can no longer remain a secret to either of them. On one occasion Mengen found her surrounded with maps of the East. He asked her what she was studying.

"'My journey to the East.' She explained her plan, and asked whether he would be of the party. He joyfully assented; and she proceeded to call up all the historical and poetical associations which throw so great a charm on this journey. Suddenly she said, 'One of Andlau's friends has just been appointed Consul at Alexandria. He wrote me so to-day, and this friend is now the foundation-stone of my pyramid of hope.'

"'As soon as the Baron von Andlau is with you, I shall be *de trop*,' said Mengen very coldly, 'and I fancy you would then willingly dispense with me.'

"'Why should you deprive yourself of the pleasure?' she inquired kindly; 'and can I then ever be surrounded by too many friends?'

"'Ah, you make me your slave—not your friend.'

"'If I do so, you are right to break loose from me; but I do it unconsciously.'

* * * * * *

"'But go, Count Mengen—go; if your liberty is infringed by me, I do not keep you.'

"'Unconsciously, as you said yourself.'

"'Well, if you won't go, you must not complain. You

may break your chains, but you must not rebel against them.'"

As if from a presentiment that his strength of mind would soon be put to the proof, she, half in earnest, requires him to take a vow that, come what may, he will never be wanting to himself.

"'Now then,' said Mengen, exerting himself to keep up the tone of feeling; 'now, you must give me something which will constantly remind me of it, which will never leave me.'

"'That is but fair,' said she; 'Duke Christian of Brunswick constantly wore a glove of Elizabeth of the Palatinate in his helmet. My yellow glove would have an excellent effect in your black hat.'

"Mario rose, and walked to her writing-table. On it stood a small Etruscan vase, containing rings and seals. He brought it to her. She glanced over the contents, and at length selected a plain gold ring, with a single large pearl, and the device: *Qui me cherche, me trouve.* 'Is this ring to your liking?'

"By way of reply, Mengen held out his hand, and begged her to place the ring on the ring finger. She was about to comply, when she suddenly bethought herself, and said slowly. 'No, that finger will at some future time wear another ring, to which mine must give place. Grant it a place from which it can never be expelled. No objections!' she exclaimed, with animation. 'I am wilful! I will have a place to myself, be it ever so small—I will have my own place, or none at all. It is for you to choose.'

"'It is for you to command,' replied Mario; 'I meant only, that you make every place your own.'

"'Oh yes, if I take my stand on one which never brings me into collision with the claims of the world. See, the ring fits your little finger exactly:' and she placed it there.

"At the conclusion of this interview, Mario was so happy that he had quite forgotten how cast down he was at the commencement. To Faustine, however, as soon as he went away, the question suggested itself—whether Andlau would be quite satisfied with this gift of the ring. In his presence she would certainly have given it, and have been sure of his

consent. But in his absence? The resolution to write to him a full account of it the next morning, quieted her.'

She is interrupted, and forgets to write; yet Madame Hahn-Hahn labours hard to persuade us that there was no coquetry, no selfishness, no intentional trifling with the feelings of others, in what she did. It was their fault or misfortune if their paths crossed, or their destiny became blended with hers.

"'I really cannot bear to live so lonely, and if Mengen were not here!—Thank God, he is.' Whether this delight in his presence would outlast Andlau's return — whether Mario would not have reason to complain, if that were not the case—never so much as occurred to her. She thought she had a right to rejoice with all her soul in this attractive object. She saw no danger in this. It would be doing her injustice to call this levity, though there was that in her nature which produces levity. But life was to her a problem, how to mould herself to the greatest possible perfection; and every incident was a fresh stroke of the chisel to assist in freeing the divine image from the rough mass of rock. Whatever fell in her way, she accepted as sent from on high to be worked up for her improvement, without doing wrong to any one. But what thread of existence is drawn out in so lonely a direction, that no other gets entangled or interwoven with it."

A consciousness of her critical position begins at last to break upon her. Would Andlau and Mengen agree? Would it be possible for her to keep well with both of them? She felt that it would not. She felt that her only safe and honest course was, to tell Mengen at once the exact nature of her connection with Andlau; but this would drive him from her, and she could not make up her mind to such a sacrifice. Whilst she is still wavering, Mengen is obliged to leave Dresden. A party of her friends are with her on the last evening they are to pass together; but he stays them all out.

"At last she was alone with Mario. Silent, with folded arms, he stood before her for a time, for his feelings stifled his words. She stood up, placed both hands, clasped together, on his arm. 'Till our next meeting, friend.'

"'Can I part from you thus?' inquired he in the same low tone, and clasped her hands in his. 'Oh, Faustine, I cannot!' he exclaimed with overflowing vehemence, and pressed her to his heart.

"'Oh, this is not right,' said she, still with the same expression of sadness in look and tone.

"'Pardon, Faustine,' said Mario, more softly, and his hand glided lightly over her hair, and across her cheek — 'For I love you.'

"All at once she stood up, disengaged from his arm, in front of him. She spread out her arms not towards him, but upwards to heaven, and with a joyful ecstatic tone, exclaimed, 'He loves me!'

"'Whither, then, with this agitating glow, Faustine, if not to me?' cried Mario, and flung his arms round her as if to chain her to his side.

"'He loves me!' she repeated with the same inward enthusiasm. She clasped his head with both her hands, gazed on him, then shook her own slowly, and said as in a dream: 'But that cannot be true.'

"'Not true? Oh, Faustine! have you not felt how, by degrees, my very existence has become blended with your own; how my heart has learned to beat in your breast; my spirit to fly in your direction; my whole being to keep pace with yours? Is not that love, Faustine?'

"'Oh, but that is dreadful!'

"'Why, Faustine, angel, you love me.'

"'I!' exclaimed she, and passed her hand across her brow. 'I — you? You are strangely mistaken, Count Mengen.'

"Mario's radiant features were suddenly convulsed. He moved Faustine from him, and said, in a menacing tone — 'Faustine!'

"She sank into a chair. Her tears flowed fast, and there was an indescribable air of suffering in her whole frame. Mario had not the power to leave her, although at the first moment he had made a movement towards the door. He

knelt before her, and said: 'Faustine, how can you tell such an untruth?'

"'I tell no untruth,' she murmured, without looking up.

"'Look in my face, firmly and quietly, and now answer me — Do you not love me, Faustine?'

"'*No!*' said she, in a hardly audible tone; but unconsciously her eyes rested on him with such heavenly tenderness, that he exclaimed, enchanted — 'Your sweet deceitful lips speak false! your eyes say *yes*, and I believe *them*.'

"'No, no!' she exclaimed, in increasing agony, and held both hands before her eyes; 'Do not mind the treacherous eyes; the lips speak the truth.'

"'Faustine,' said Mengen, rising up, and his angry voice grew more terrifying from the tremulousness which excitement threw into it; 'if you do not love me; if all has been but trifling — the amusement of an idle hour: if you have lavished the whole fascination of your nature as a vulgar coquetry: if you have accustomed yourself to such a disregard of the feelings of others, as to anatomise living, beating, bleeding hearts, for your instruction or your sport, then I have no expression for my contempt.'

"'Mario!' shrieked Faustine, and sank upon her knees, 'I love you!'"

She now gives him the history of her life. She was married young to a common-place man, Count Obernau. She felt no love for him, and, before she became his wife, she told him so; but he assured her that the required feeling would come in good time, and that they should do very well together if it did not. But everything about him was repelling to her sensitive impulsive character, and she naturally enough caught at the first offer of sympathy. An attachment grew up between Baron von Andlau and herself, not discouraged by her husband, who had begun to get tired of her, and thought her incapable of loving any one, since she had failed to love him. Set on by his sister, however, he took to watching them, and soon surprised them in an attitude of tenderness, which, though not quite irreconcilable

with purity, was certainly calculated to put the most philosophical husband's philosophy to the test. Obernau runs for his pistol, and insists on Andlau's fighting him. "Andlau retained his composure, conjured him to spare me, and not make a public scandal; whilst I stood like a statue, deprived of speech, thought, and reflection; nor did I recover my faculties until a pistol shot was discharged, and Andlau fell at my feet. Then I knew what I had to do! I ordered horses, conveyed him to his own house, sent for surgeons, and stayed with him. Obernau, the whole world, were nothing to me from that hour." The husband pressed her to return; "I will never," she replied, "return to the house of a man who has degraded himself and me in the eyes of the world." He, on his part, refuses to consent to a divorce, and when, two years after the breach, he dies, she herself declines becoming the wife of Andlau, from a fantastic aversion to a tie which had made her so miserable.

"'I thank you,' said Mengen, 'for unveiling your destiny to me, and doubly do I thank you, since I see nothing in it to separate us.'

"Faustine looked at him without speaking, and passed her hand across her eyes, as if to convince herself that she was awake.

"'Nothing! for you love me, and Andlau — you love no longer; for, if you still loved him, your eye would never have alighted on me with any other than the indifferent friendly glance you have for every body.'

. . . . .

"'Oh, then, I am miserably false!' said she, in a hollow voice.

"'And what would you be if you remained standing between two men, fascinating both, belonging half to each, wholly to neither? And what would you be if you returned back with a divided heart to him whom you *have* loved, and said "I love another, but I will be true to you?" You love the good, the beautiful, the high, wherever you find it,

Faustine—that makes you so fascinating; and you are too much the slave of the present to chain yourself lastingly to an individual—that makes you weak. I will not defend this weakness, because you might then reproach me with sophistry or accuse me of speaking for my own interest. But trust me—if you were my sister, I would say the same. Untruth is a torn, half, wavering existence—a contradiction in the soul; end it by a prompt decision, by an irrevocable step, and you have freed yourself. Choose, choose, Faustine!' cried Mario, and the composure with which he had hitherto spoken was changed into the most troubled passion—'now, directly, on the spot! In half an hour, I leave this room, and it depends on you whether I shall ever enter it again; for we cannot go on as formerly.'"

She still hesitates; but his decision of character controls her in her own despite, and he leads her to the writing-table.

"'Now—write, Faustine.'

"'Oh God!' gasped she, and sank into the chair—'I cannot!'

"'Then I must,' said Mario, composedly.

"'Are you mad?' cried she, beside herself. 'No! no hand but my own shall plunge the dagger into his heart; for I am doing it, I know.'

"'Yes,' said Mario; 'his or mine.'

. . . . . .

"'See, you have no alternative. Granted you plunged it into mine, what would you do next? Say nothing to Andlau?—That is not possible for you. Besides, he would guess that you are not the same; and, if he inquired, how would you be able to play the hypocrite—to lie? Suppose you told him what has occurred. Do you believe he would be able to shake off the impression? Were it a caprice on your side—if, in an idle hour, you had amused yourself by trifling with me—he might smile at it, and be comforted. Can he now?'

"'Never!' and she seized the pen. She wrote as follows:—'Anastasius, your last word at parting has come true. I have forgotten you—no, not you, but myself. I mean, I have forgotten that I could or would live in you

alone. We must never see each other again, Anastasius. By this decision I ruin your life, and I do not even entreat your forgiveness. You will know best what to think of Faustine.'"

On a former occasion, when Faustine playfully asked Andlau to pay her the compliment of a little jealousy, he replied—"You know that with me there can never be any question of jealousy, because I acknowledge no rival. I readily surrender to another the property which he extends his hand to seize." He acted up to his principle. No reply of any sort was returned for many months; but, as she said herself, the letter was his death-warrant.

Faustine's aversion to matrimony is overcome by Mengen's arguments:—

"'Do you suppose I could contentedly resign myself to an equivocal connexion, open to every misconstruction, where there is no reason for it beyond feminine caprice? Thousands may do homage to you; many may love you; your husband alone can protect and honour you, as you ought to be protected and honoured.'"

She promises to marry him as soon as he has obtained the consent of his parents, and he departs. Whilst he is absent, a harrowing incident occurs. Clement Wallsdorf shoots himself in her presence for love of her. Mario returns, snatches her from a scene of horror, and marries her.

Here the regular narrative breaks off, and the conclusion is related by the authoress in her own person; as she heard it from Mario, whom she meets in Venice five or six years afterwards, with his child, the child of Faustine.

They had lived happily beyond expectation for five years, and Faustine was the pet, the pride of his family. "Intellectual supremacy—which makes ordinary women so unendurable, that we feel them as a troublesome appendage, something like an illustrious

name in poverty—seemed given her to show that the most superior women can be the most amiable. She quietly folded her wings to prevent others from feeling they had none; but, at the slightest encouragement, she spread them and flew up, and caused the etherial lustre, the bloom, of her region, to play down into our circle." But there is a canker in the rose-bud. She is restless without knowing why, and teases Mengen with fancies, which his strong good sense is unable to keep down. "Il n'y a de satisfaction içi-bas que pour les âmes, ou brutales ou divines!" she exclaims with Montaigne, and longs for a cloister where she may pour out her soul in prayer. "Mario, to adore eternally—that would make me happy." She has a fit of painting, and the pursuit of fame diverts her for a time. With the proud consciousness of genius, she would say:—

"'The thirst for glory is a consciousness of futurity: he who does not believe in his own future, deserves no present. That my pictures may be simply in the taste of the day, and therefore without a future, often weighs heavily on my heart. I know that I possess a precious treasure; still, whether I shall work it up into jewels, or coins, or what else, I know not; at least not precisely. We deceive ourselves in the value of our productions, like mothers in the beauty of their children. Petrarch expected immortality from his poem "Africa," and obtained it by his "Sonnets." It would be lamentable if I left nothing behind me but "Africas."'"

Mario tries the effect of a journey to the East. The experiment answers whilst the novelty lasts, and then she is as restless as ever. "I will travel no more; I know now that the earth is the same everywhere, and mankind too; only the surface is varied; in one by climate, in another by temperament. The new is always something old, and the something different is always the same. That can never satisfy." In vain does he remind her that complete satisfaction is

not to be expected, because never intended for us, on earth;—that if, by a miracle, every wish could be satisfied and every aim attained, she would weep, like Alexander, for more worlds to conquer. In vain does he endeavour to reanimate her former enthusiasm for painting, poetry, and fame.

"'To what purpose?' was her answer. 'That which is not of the first class need not exist at all, and only two or three books, and as many works of art, are of the first class. Each of these made an era, struck out a path, gave a direction. This depended not on him who wrote, or painted, or constructed them, but on God's sending him into the world at the very moment when an efficient instrument was needed.'

. . . . . .

"'You love me no longer!' I exclaimed with bitterness.

"'Fool!' she replied, with that ecstatic smile which I never saw on any brow but hers. 'Have you not touched the tabernacle of my heart? Is not my son yours? No, Mario, I love you; I have loved nothing so much; I shall never love any thing *after* you, but *above* you — God. My soul has squandered itself in such transports of love and inspiration with yours, that all it can ever meet with in this region, will be but a repetition, and perhaps—an insipid one. They have so broken up my heart in searching for its treasures, that the gold mines are probably exhausted.

"'Dearest Mario, do not grudge me a little, a very little, rest on this side of the grave! If you did but know how weary I am, you yourself would guide me to another path.'

"'You are striking into a false one,' I replied, 'for you are about to be false to all your duties. Have you not vowed before God to stay by me in weal and in woe? Have you not the childhood of your son to watch over, and his youth to guide? Have you not your genius to cherish? — that gift, more heavenly than any, because a voice of power, of truth, of consolation for mankind.

"'Faustine, do not forget that the crown of thorns is inseparable from the crown of glory; the deepest pangs have given birth to the highest genius! He who would rise again, must suffer himself to be bound upon the cross! He who would ascend to heaven, must not fear the descent into hell.

By what right would you enjoy only the sunny side of everything?'"

Her resolution is confirmed by a meeting with Andlau, who dies of a disease in the chest, brought on by the wound received from her husband. She reaches his deathbed just time enough to see him die. "She murmured in a scarcely audible tone, '*Anastasius;*' and he, who was insensible to everything else, heard her voice, unclosed his eyes, smiled, tried to reach out his hand towards her, uttered '*Ini*,' and expired."

She entered a convent of the *Vive Sepolte* at Rome, and died five months afterwards, a model of piety and humility.

This, it must be allowed, is a fine, but wild conception; and it may be true that there is nothing in actual life resembling it;—even in Germany, where all varieties of female character are to be found in much greater plenty than in any other country. Nor is there anything in actual life resembling an Undine, a Psyche, a Corinna, a Sylphide. These finer natures—these creatures of the imagination and the heart—are, and are meant to be, the very opposite of Wordsworth's household charmer—perhaps little less poetical, and certainly more useful in her way:—

> "A creature not too bright or good,
> For human nature's daily food;
> For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
> Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles."

They must be tried by a different standard; and the first questions in the present instance are:—Was the author's object an artistical and legitimate one, and is it attained by the book?

She wanted a vehicle for developing her theory of existence, her notions of genius, her reflections on the mind, her experience of the heart. For this purpose she frames a character, eccentric and fantastic, but

full of life, light, and grace; made up of many qualities which are seldom found together — depth and volatility, humility and self-confidence, truth and fickleness; and endowed with many gifts — feeling, fancy, knowledge, thought, sensibility, beauty, genius — which are as rarely united in one woman as the mingled beauties of exulting Greece. Yet Madame Hahn-Hahn has moulded them into a harmonious whole, which not merely satisfies the critic's judgment, but (what is of more importance) keeps up the reader's interest to the end. There are some episodical passages and conversations which bear rather loosely on the main story, but even these open glimpses, and suggest reflections, which we should be sorry to have missed.

In a concluding paragraph, the author, addressing a male companion, says: "Women like Faustine are the avenging angels of our sex, which Providence sends occasionally, but rarely, upon earth, and to whom the best of you fall a prey; for only the best of you are prepared — as the mass of women are — to give a heart for a heart, a life for a life, an entire existence for an entire existence. — Beware of the Faustines." This would be tantamount to saying, "Beware of me, Ida, Gräfin Hahn-Hahn," if the report regarding the identity of the characters were true; but she indignantly repels the insinuation. In a subsequent work*, a conversation takes place regarding "Georgiona," by "Gräfin Schönholm," both feigned names:—

"'I assure you she has copied herself and the incidents of her life.'

"'But nature cannot be copied: it must be conceived so as to make part of the mind, in order to be naturally portrayed. Gräfin Schönholm is said to be "Georgiona," just as Lord Byron was said to be Childe Harold, and Madame

* Ulrich, vol. i. p. 225.

de Staël Corinna. That is now become an established practice; if an author writes with an air of reality, the incidents are said to be real; and what he has felt and lived inwardly, he is supposed to have gone through in actual life.'"

In the same work (vol. ii. p. 196) a sort of moral is suggested: "Have not most women, in proportion as they are more richly gifted, some resemblance to Faustine, particularly in their thirst for emotion? *We* get tired of a good, commonplace, matter-of-fact mother of a family; and an imaginative, fanciful, fascinating woman, full of mind and sensibility, who keeps us in a constant state of excitement, gets tired of *us*." In other words, in feeling as in mechanics, what is gained in time or duration is lost in intensity or strength: we cannot have it both ways: we cannot keep our cake and eat it too; or, to adopt the more dignified language of Lord Byron, those who cannot rest satisfied without an unbroken succession of high-wrought emotions, must make up their minds to be constantly fluctuating "between the misery of disappointment and the misery of satiety."

"Ulrich" is the work which, next to "Faustine," has attracted most attention. The author has taken a larger canvas, and crowded it with figures; but we lose in compactness what we gain in variety. We also see in it, what is not unusual in her works, the want of a settled purpose — a definite aim, at the commencement: a defect which Sir Walter Scott frankly acknowledged in his own.

Three young ladies leave a celebrated establishment in Heidelberg on the same day: Unica, the daughter of Count Erberg; Clotilda, the daughter of the Frankfort banker, Marana; and Margarita, the daughter of an impoverished widow of noble birth, the Freifrau von Ringoltingen. Clotilda marries Count Ostwald, an elderly, ugly, and weak-minded man, for the sake of his title; Margarita marries

Prince Thierstein, to please her mother; Unica contracts a girlish attachment for young Marana, the banker's son; but her proud parents will not hear of such a union, and press her to marry her cousin, Count Ulrich Erberg, the owner of the adjoining château, for whom, at first, she feels no inclination.

"Ulrich, it must be owned, could not be termed handsome; he had fine but strong features, a bilious complexion, eyebrows which almost touched, and, together with his hair and whiskers, darkened his face too much; but the indescribably noble expression of his brow, his fine figure, small feet and hands (the inheritance of aristocracy), and simple bearing, were far from making a disagreeable impression on the whole."

We quote this description in an abridged shape, because Ulrich may be regarded as Madame Hahn-Hahn's beau-ideal of a lady-killer. Thus, although he expresses little more than respectful affection for Unica, and it is obvious that his thoughts are constantly wandering, she consents to marry him, and resolves to win his love. Her first step is a somewhat anomalous one for a bride. On reaching her room, on the wedding night, he finds her gloved and bonneted as for a walk: —

"Ulrich's first movement was a step towards the door, his second to pass his hand over his forehead, and throw back his head, as he often did, when he sought to master an unpleasant feeling.

"'My dear Unica, have the goodness to tell me what this means?'

"She turned half round, and said, dryly and peremptorily, 'I would be alone.'

"Ulrich gazed on her with an indescribable mixture of pride and melancholy, and replied — 'Why do you suddenly drive me from you, Unica? It gives me pain, and will do you harm.'

"A gleam of triumph shot across her face, and in a more decided tone she repeated — 'I would be alone.'

"'You wish, then, to be alone now — *and for ever*,' he said, without sharpness, without bitterness, without ill-humour, but with an unconquerable decisiveness. Unica felt this. Twice had her resolution been shaken; it should not be so a third time.

"'*Now, and for ever*,' she said. Ulrich bent his head proudly, and retired to his own room."

There is an English novel of considerable merit in which a union begins in the same manner, and ends happily. Unica calculated on a similar result, and meant merely to pique her husband into a passion for her. Unfortunately, she had not calculated on the effects of an early love affair, which, though transitory in its duration, had left ineffaceable traces on his heart. To quiet her fears on another account, he relates it to her.

He begins with a remark which would seem to imply, that Germany has lost a little of its characteristic earnestness: —

"'A man now-a-days can do nothing more unbecoming — that is to say, nothing more laughable — than confess himself to be mastered by a feeling. It is not merely the men — even the women look upon him as a simpleton; for love, the *passion*, is out of fashion. It is no longer to satisfy the heart, to absorb our existence, but to gratify our vanity, and (when matters come to the highest pass) our senses. No La Vallière takes refuge with her rejected heart amongst the Carmelites; no De Rance flies to La Trappe after seeing his beloved Duchesse de Montbazon in the pangs of death.'"

This view of the matter is a superficial and impatient one. Modern men and women are as capable of passion as their forefathers; hearts beat as wildly under embroidered waistcoats as under steel cuirasses; and love plays a much more important part in the lives of most of us than we are willing to confess. Who, for example, would have expected to find

Bentham (see his "Memoirs"), in his eightieth year, writing to the object of his first and only love, to remind her of the present of a flower! "From that day not a single one has passed (not to mention nights) in which you have not engrossed more of my thoughts than I could have wished." If other men of strong feelings could be induced to register their emotions, we should probably soon have a series of confessions as startling as Rousseau's.

Neither is it true that great sacrifices are unknown. Not three years since a man of fortune, connexion, and accomplishment, long past what is commonly called the more susceptible period of life, but in the full enjoyment of his faculties, suddenly retired from the world in consequence of a disappointment of the heart; and he is now (1844) living in a small island, uninhabited except by a solitary attendant and himself. The best knight that ever lived could do no more for a duchess.

It is admitted that a few are still cast in the mould of the olden time, and Ulrich is one of them. He meets a beautiful unknown, named Melusina, on the Lake of Como, and falls desperately in love with her. She returns his passion, and they live very pleasantly together for a month; at the end of which her holiday is up; and she leaves him as wise as when they met regarding her family or position, after exacting a promise that he will neither follow nor inquire for her. Four years pass away, during which he thinks of nothing else, when one morning he sees her in Berlin with a child, whom he supposes to be his own. The mystery is cleared up at the opera, where Melusina happens to occupy the next box. She sees him, faints away, and makes a scene. He carries her to her carriage, and returns to his party.

"'My dear Ulrich,' whispered my aunt, as I resumed my place beside her, 'the attention of the whole audience is fixed on you.'

"'So let it,' I replied unconcernedly.

"'But, good Heaven!' exclaimed she impatiently, 'do you not know that you have given yourself *en spectacle* with the mistress of the —— Minister?'

"I was spirit-broken, I am so still. The object of my worship is cast down into the dust where all may tread upon it; and yet I have found nothing on earth so beautiful as Melusina. Between contempt and adoration, disgust and longing — the bitterest and the sweetest feelings — I stand powerless; for I loathe the life in which nothing is so beautiful as a painted lie."

Gratitude, or vanity, induces men to make ample allowances for faults committed for their own dear sakes; and Ulrich had a perfect right to believe in some kind of mystic pre-ordained union of souls, which made it quite natural and proper for Melusina to dispense with ceremony; but surely it was a little unreasonable to expect that a woman, whose acquaintance he had formed under such peculiar circumstances, would turn out a pattern of purity; and instead of fainting away and having a brain-fever, he should have exclaimed,—

> "I ask not, I know not, if guilt's in that heart,
> I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art."

Ulrich's story is by no means consolatory to his wife, but they get on pretty well till he pays a visit to Prince Thierstein — a rough-mannered, narrow-minded man, who has married Margarita, Unica's schoolfellow, in the hope of continuing his race. She enters the dining-room, and Ulrich is presented to her. "Silently she received him, and silently, breathless, lost to everything around him, stood Ulrich; for Melusina, but Melusina without a shade of sin or sorrow, Melusina, younger, brighter, stood before him as Margaret, Princess of Thierstein." They are, in fact, sisters, but this does not appear till long afterwards, when Ulrich has transferred his affections to

Margaret. Their attachment forms the grand feature of the book, and gives rise to a great variety of scenes and reflections. The character of Margaret is finished with great care; and we must pause to quote a passage:—

"Perhaps Ulrich alone knew what a deep knowledge of things she possessed; for in society she seldom gave vent to her thoughts, and spoke with few words. 'I am not in the same key with society,' she once said to Ulrich; 'consequently what I say is too high or too low for the general symphony. I am obliged to perform solos, or duets with you.' This neither amazed nor distressed her; she neither sought to catch the tone or gain the opinion of others. She had the indifference of genuine superiority, namely, the most complete indifference regarding the approbation of the mass. Certain persons sometimes acquire an extraordinary reputation in the world for wit, talent, or genius. *In general, this proves nothing more than that they are of the precise height which places them on a level with the crowd; both what they are, and what they produce, exactly corresponds with its demands.* Were this more, or did they produce more, they would instantly lose this happy equipoise, be out of proportion to the measuring rod applied to them, and only be able to compel the recognition of their superiority by overwhelming proofs. The artist, the author, may give such proofs; but daily life, and the social circle, do not always afford fine minds an opportunity for development."

After some months of dangerous intimacy, they separate. "Remain far from me," are Margaret's parting words, "till I call you, and this call will first reach you from my grave." Ulrich writes her an imprudent letter, which falls into her husband's hands. He casts her off, and she retires to live in a small cottage in Switzerland with her child. Ulrich, ignorant of the consequences of his imprudence, resolves to travel for some years, and, as a preliminary measure, requires his wife to agree to a divorce. It is at length agreed between them, that things shall

remain unaltered for the present; but in case he comes back within three years and renews the demand, she shall consent.

After rambling for more than a year in Russia, he arrives in Stockholm, where a returned letter, addressed by him to Margaret at her husband's house, reaches him. This makes him desperate, and he devotes himself during several months to an opera-singer, in the hope of driving Margaret from his thoughts. Whilst at Stockholm he pays a visit to the celebrated authoress, the Countess Ilda Schönholm, and it is difficult to believe that no living person is intended.

"Ulrich had heard a great deal about her, both praise and blame; had read all her books, and formed an image of her in his own mind which by no means agreed with the original. He possessed taste and penetration enough not to regard a woman who had written a book as a caricature on body and soul; but involuntarily he had made the imposing de Staël — with her genius, her passion, her vanity, her goodness, her fancy, her enthusiasm — his type of an authoress; and turned Ilda into a German de Staël. Not a trace of it. Composed and simple, firm without haughtiness, negligent without affectation, indifferent regarding the impression which she made, she did not give herself the smallest trouble to attract attention. Whether she disdained the littleness of the means used to produce an effect, or found the end too petty, or had the intimate conviction of a superiority which repels the many and attracts a few — but attracts them irresistibly, as the loadstone the steel, — suffice it to say, not a word, not a syllable, not the most distant indication, betrayed her talent and her customary occupations."

The causes of the differences between authors and their works are explained, in a very striking Essay, in Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton's "Student." The secret of Madame Hahn-Hahn's anxiety to dissipate some supposed delusion on this subject, is the pre-

judice still prevalent amongst the highest classes in Germany against female authorship.

Ilda wears a gown of black velvet, with plain wristbands and collar; and here we may take occasion to observe that Madame Hahn-Hahn seldom fails to give a minute description of the dresses of her favourites; rightly thinking it impossible to convey an exact impression of the person without the dress. She also attaches considerable importance to the feet, and has propounded a new theory regarding them, which may serve as a pendent or counterpoise to Lord Byron's regarding hands, which (his own being small and well-shaped) he declared to be the only mark of birth which aristocracy can generate. Madame Hahn-Hahn says: —

"There is much more physiognomy in the feet than in the hands. The hands are so ill-treated, so practised in coquetry, so ruined by artistical skill — the piano turns the fingers into little knobs — that a hand seldom preserves its original character from the levelling effect of daily use; and when it does, it is not what is commonly called a handsome hand. That must be plump, round, smooth, white as marble, and marked with blue veins. I have an antipathy to such a one: the thought of touching it chills me; it has something of the smoothness of the snake, the coldness of the fish, and at times I fancy, if geese had no wings, they would have just such hands. The foot has remained in its primitive state. The princess may destroy it by too much care, and the peasant girl by neglect; still it must support the body; it is in keeping with it as the base with the pillar; and its tread, its bearing, correspond with the character of the person. If I had a taste for solid pursuits, I would set up my system against craniology."

We need hardly add, that Ilda Gräfin Schönholm is described as having well-formed, tapering, thoroughbred feet.

Just as Ulrich is getting tired of his opera-singer, he receives a letter, signed "Melusina," informing him

that Margaret, thrown off and abandoned on his account, is living near Vevay. It now appears that they are sisters. Melusina eloped at sixteen with a man who subsequently abandoned her at Paris; where she became acquainted with an elderly diplomatist, who, during his life, protected her as a parent, and left her a good fortune at his death. This was the Ambassador with whom Ulrich had seen her at Berlin. Ulrich leaves Stockholm, procures Unica's consent to a divorce, and travels post-haste to Vevay, where he finds Melusina dying, and Margaret watching over her. Melusina joins their hands, and dies.

When Voltaire wished to depreciate Rousseau, he made a short abstract of the plot of "La Nouvelle Heloïse," and headed it *De ce qui se fait dans le livre de Jean Jacques.* He could not have hit on a more effective method of conveying an injurious impression of a work of manners or feeling; particularly when, as in the work before us, the bare incidents require a good deal of shading, to prevent harsh inferences from being founded on them.

Let it be remembered then, that, since both law and custom legitimate a marriage with the sister of a deceased wife in Germany, there is no more harm in Ulrich's becoming attached to the two sisters successively than to any other two women. Neither must the comparative carelessness with which the marriage tie is dissolved, be charged altogether to the account of the individual; for it is principally attributable to the facility with which divorces are obtained. In Prussia, there are fifteen distinct grounds of divorce *a vinculo matrimonii* enumerated in the Code, any one of which is sufficient;—the infidelity of either party, incompatibility of temper, and mutual consent, being of the number.

Prussia is indebted to Frederick II. for the existing laxity of its laws in this respect. The other Pro-

testant states retain, nominally, most of the pristine strictness; but whether from the influence of example, or other local causes, they are practically as loose as their neighbour. When a couple are anxious to be free, it is simply necessary for one of them to be detected in an equivocal situation (it need not be one of positive guilt), and their wishes may be gratified. What is there wanted is a more careful inquiry into cases of collusion, which, when known, and recognised as such, are not even attended with much danger to reputation.

Opinions may vary as to the degree of strictness with which the marriage vow should be maintained; but it is impossible not to see that the tie must lose its sacredness, if it is liable to be set aside on the first growth of a new inclination—the first feeling of satiety—the first discovery of a difference in taste or temper—or (for it all comes to this) the first suggestion of caprice. Indeed, we are quite sure that not one couple in ten ever lived together, for a series of years, without intervals of struggle—without hours, days, weeks, when it required all their firmness, all their good sense, all their consciousness of the true nature of their position, to induce them to bear and forbear, till the habit of mutual concession became a pleasure, and the basis of a fixed affection had been laid. It stands to reason that the public opinion of Germany must be in a loose state regarding marriage, and we must not blame the novelist for representing types of her country and her time.

It is satisfactory to be able to say, that Madame Hahn-Hahn is not one of those writers who exhaust themselves in two or three efforts; who hoard up a limited stock of thought and observation, pour it all into their first books, and remain dry and unproductive during the remainder of their days. We are

by no means sure that her last book, "Cecil," is not her best both in conception and execution, though parts of it are spun out to tediousness. Moreover, it opens new ground, being an attempt to trace the influence of worldliness—that sort of worldliness which honourable and enlightened parents would think it right to encourage in a son—on a man of talent, and sensibility, who has his fortune to make. The effect is judiciously heightened by contrast. The most prominent female character is a woman who consults only her own sense of duty, and uniformly does what she thinks right, without reference to opinion or the slightest regard to consequences. We cannot afford room for a detailed examination; and with regard to the rest of the novels named in our list, we can only say that they are all distinguished, more or less, by the same qualities as "Faustine" and "Ulrich;" and that it is necessary to read all, in order thoroughly to enjoy any one; since (like Balzac's "Scènes de la Vie Privée) all the stories are connected, and form something like a succession of *tableaux*. Thus, the Countess Schönholm, who holds such long conversations with Ulrich at Stockholm, and his correspondent Ohlen, are leading personages in "Aus der Gesellschaft" and "Der Rechte;" and the fate of Sigismund Forster, in the story of that name, materially influences the fortunes of "Cecil." It is obvious that these occasional renewals of intimacy with old acquaintance may be made extremely agreeable; and in the cases before us, the contrivance has been skilfully and not too frequently employed.

It was part of our design at starting, to endeavour to deduce some general rules regarding German morals and manners from these books; but had we space at present, it would be neither fair nor logical to found any broad conclusion or comparison on so

slender a basis, as the writings of a single author.* Her countrymen and countrywomen would certainly have no reason to complain; for both conclusion and comparison would be favourable to them. The tone of the best society, in most of their great towns, would appear to be remarkable for ease, good taste, readiness to amuse and be amused, and for the marked discouragement, if not total absence, of offensive pretension, or exclusiveness. There is the usual allowance of trifling and gossiping; examples of prejudice, ignorance, and vanity are not wanting, and much of the conversation is made up of conventional commonplaces: yet it is impossible to help feeling that social intercourse stands on a sound rational basis, and has attained a high degree of refinement and agreeableness. This is probably nearly the same all the world over among the best of the higher classes, who are now everywhere found coalescing with all that is really worth cultivating among the rest. Still, curious points of difference, affecting manners or morals, might be selected.

For example, an Englishwoman seldom leaves her house unattended, or without a *chaperon*, and would be seriously compromised were she to travel much with a man not nearly related to her. In Germany, a woman may undertake a journey, of any length or duration, with a male friend of any age, without compromising herself; that is, if their vocations really call them the same way, and the journey be not undertaken as a blind. The Germans, in short, do not take for granted that opportunity will necessarily create inclination; or that friends will be converted into lovers

* The best account of the habits and manners of the eastern and north-eastern parts of Germany will be found in a novel in three volumes, *Soll und Haben*, by Gustavus Freytag, admirably translated by Mrs. Malcolm, and published under the title of *Debt and Credit* It has merits of a high order, besides graphic descriptions of every-day life, and forms a marked contrast to the common run of German novels.

by sitting together in a carriage during the daytime and occupying apartments in the same hotel at night. In one novel, we find a countess travelling with a handsome young artist: in another, an aged President gives his wife full permission to travel with a young member of his court; and we find, on inquiry, that such occurrences would excite no more comment in actual life than in Madame Hahn-Hahn's pages. The same liberty is enjoyed by women in the United States. In England, however, when a middle-aged nobleman, of grave habits, happens to state, in a letter to a Bishop, (a curious confidant for a *liaison*,) that he has been taking a ten days' tour with an accomplished female friend, his excellent and right reverend editor feels it a duty to bear personal testimony to the purity of her intentions.* It might be made an instructive question, how far the strictness of the English rule indicates a superior state of morals, or the contrary.

The best of Madame Hahn-Hahn's books of Travels are her "Reisebriefe," being Letters to various members of her family (from October 1840, to November 1841), describing a journey across the Provençal country, over the Pyrenees, and through the greater part of Spain and Portugal. With an enthusiastic love for the fine arts, a marked preference for the romance of history, and a mind crowded with associations, she carries us along lightly and pleasantly enough. We may not have to thank her for much constitutional or statistical information; but we learn the aspect of the cities and the habits of the people; pick up some agreeable reminiscences about Moors and Troubadours; acquire a fresh feeling for Velasquez and Murillo, as well as a fresh relish for Don Quixote and Gil Blas; are made eyewitnesses of *auto-*

* Letters of the Earl of Dudley to the Bishop of Llandaff, p. 353.

da-fés and bull-fights; and find the Alhambra restored for our especial benefit.

"Astralion, an Arabesk," is a little dramatic Poem, in which the *dramatis personæ* are birds, who talk in good rhymed verse on several subjects not connected with ornithology.

Madame Hahn-Hahn visited England, Scotland, and Ireland, in 1846, and made our social institutions, especially those affecting the well-being of the lower classes, her especial object of study. She embodied her observations in a work, which was forwarded in manuscript from Naples to the writer of these pages, upon an understanding that he was to engage a translator and a publisher. Through some unaccountable oversight of the Foreign office, the MS. never reached him till two years afterwards, by which time Madame Hahn-Hahn had lost all interest in it, and it was consequently returned to her. During the intervening period, a domestic affliction had induced her to join the Roman Catholic (the *Alleinseligmachende*) Church, and to take up her residence in a convent at Mayence. She is as anxious as ever to be practically useful; and only a few months since she wrote to him for information touching an important question in morals and industry. Since her conversion, she has published two remarkable works, "Marien Bilder" (Hymns to the Virgin), and "Nach Babylon," which has been translated into English.

M. DE STENDHAL (HENRI BEYLE).

(From the Edinburgh Review, January, 1856.)

1. *Bibliothèque Contemporaine.* 2e Série. De Stendhal. Œuvres complètes. Paris: 1854–55.
2. *Romans et Nouvelles.* Précédés d'une Notice sur De Stendhal, par M. B. Colomb. 1 vol.
3. *Correspondance Inédite.* Précédée d'une Introduction, par Prosper Merimée, de l'Académie Française; ornée d'un beau Portrait de Stendhal. 2 vols.

The literary career of Henri Beyle, who wrote under the pseudonyme of M. de Stendhal, deserves to be commemorated, if only as a curious illustration of the caprice of criticism; or it may be cited in proof of the occasional readiness of contemporaries to forestall the judgment of posterity, when there is no longer a living and sentient object for their jealousy. His habits were simple, his tastes were of a nature to be easily and cheaply gratified, and his pecuniary wants were consequently of the most modest description. He would have been content, he tells us, to rub on with 4000 francs a year at Paris; he would have thought himself rich with 6000; and in an autobiographical sketch he says, "The only thing I see clearly is, that for twenty years my *ideal* has been to live at Paris in a fourth story, writing a drama or a novel." This ideal was never realised, because the booksellers and theatrical managers would not, or could not, bid high enough for dramas or novels from his pen; and he was eventually compelled to accept the consulship of Civita Vecchia, where the closing period of his life was shortened by the diseases of the climate, as well

as embittered by disappointment and ennui. There occurred, indeed, one striking exception to this general indifference. In the "Revue Parisienne" of September 23rd, 1840, appeared a long and carefully written article, entitled an "Etude sur H. Beyle," by Balzac, in which "La Chartreuse de Parme" was declared to be a masterpiece, and its author was described as one of the finest observers and most original writers of the age. But although elaborately reasoned out, and largely supported by analysis and quotation, this honourable outburst of enthusiasm was commonly regarded as an extravagance into which Balzac had been hurried by an exaggeration of generosity towards a fancied rival; and Beyle's courteous letter of acknowledgment contains the following sentence, showing how little disposed he was to overestimate his position or his hopes: — "This astounding article, such as no writer ever before received from another, I have read, I now venture to own to you, with bursts of laughter. Every time I came to a eulogium a little exalted, and I encountered such at every step, I saw the expression of my friends' faces at reading it."

Could he awake from the dead and see his friends' faces now, his characteristic smile of irony, rather than loud laughter, would be the form in which his feelings might be most appropriately expressed; for those friends have not waited till 1880, the earliest era at which he expected to be read; they have barely exceeded the time prescribed by Horace — *nonumque prematur in annum* — for testing the soundness of a work. Beyle died in 1842, and few beyond the very limited circle of his intimates then seemed aware that a chosen spirit had departed, or that a well of valuable thought and a fountain of exquisite sensibility had been dried up. One solitary garland of *immortelles* was flung upon his grave. An essay on his life and

character, by M. Auguste Bussière, appeared in the "Revue des Deux Mondes" for January, 1843; but the first paragraph was an avowal of the hazardous character of the attempt:—

"We approach a task which is at the same time both embarrassing and seducing, that of appreciating a man of talent whose upright character and original qualities seemed to promise a greater extent of influence than he has exercised on his contemporaries. We shall encounter in this mind and in this character odd specialities, strange anomalies, contradictions which will explain how, after having been more vaunted than read, more read than relished, more decried than judged, more cited than known, he has lived, if the expression may be used, in a sort of clandestine celebrity, to die an obscure and unmarked death. Contemporary literature, it must be owned, has found before the tomb of one of its most distinguished cultivators, only silence, or words worse than silence. M. Beyle dead, all has been said for him. His remains have not seen their funeral attendance swelled by those regrets which delight in display, and which come to seek under the folds of the pall a reflexion of the lustre shed by the living."

Unlike the noble English poet, who, after an ordinary night's sleep, awoke and found himself famous, Beyle must have slumbered thirteen years, dating from the commencement of his last, long sleep, before he could have calculated on a similar surprise on waking. But his hour has come at last, and come sooner than he anticipated. We have now before us popular and cheap editions of almost all his books (thirteen volumes), in addition to two closely printed volumes of correspondence, and three volumes of novels from his unpublished MSS., bearing striking evidence to the assiduity with which every scrap of his composition has been hunted up. We have, moreover, a somewhat

embarrassing superfluity of biographical notices from surviving friends, who, whatever their amount of agreement with Balzac in 1840, have no objection to respond to the popular demand for Beyle testimonials in 1855. Prefixed to the "Correspondance" is a condensed and pithy series of clever, polished, highly illustrative, and by no means enthusiastic, notes and reminiscences by M. Merimée. M. Sainte-Beuve has devoted two papers, distinguished by his wonted refinement and penetration, to Stendhal, in the "Causeries de Lundi." An extremely interesting biographical notice, drawn up by M. Colomb, Beyle's most attached friend and executor, from private papers and other authentic sources of information, is prefixed to the "Romans et Nouvelles;" and by way of preface or introduction to the "Chartreuse de Parme," the publishers have judiciously reprinted the long-neglected *éloge* of Balzac.

As if to complicate the problem, Beyle's critics and biographers announce and claim him as "eminently French," although he systematically ridiculed the vanity of his countrymen, reviled their taste, disliked the greater part of their literature, and, deliberately repudiating his country as "le plus vilain pays du monde que les nigauds appellent la belle France," directed himself to be designated as Milanese on his tombstone. Here is enough, and more than enough, to justify us in devoting our best attention to the social and intellectual phenomenon thus presented,—to say nothing of the interest we naturally take in the reputation of an author who, in straitened circumstances, ordered the complete collection of "*mon cher*" Edinburgh Review, and appealed to its extended circulation as an unanswerable proof that the English are more reasonable in politics than the French.

Marie-Henri Beyle was born at Grenoble, on the 23rd of January, 1783, of a family which, without

being noble, was classed and lived familiarly with the provincial aristocracy. One of his earliest preceptors was a priest, who sadly misunderstood and mismanaged his pupil. "Beyle," says M. Merimée, "was wont to relate with bitterness, after forty years, that one day, having torn his coat whilst at play, the Abbé entrusted with his education reprimanded him severely for this misdeed before his comrades, and told him he was a disgrace to religion and to his family. We laughed when he narrated this incident; but he saw in it simply an act of priestly tyranny and a horrible injustice, where there was nothing to laugh at, and he felt as acutely as on the day of its occurrence the wound inflicted on his self-love." It was one of his aphorisms that our parents and our masters are our natural enemies when we enter the world; the simple matter of fact being, that his own character, tendencies, and aspirations had been invariably opposed to the plans, wishes, and modes of thinking of his family. They were clearly wrong in endeavouring to force him into uncongenial paths of study; nor was he likely to be cured of his inborn wilfulness, or his morbid sensibility, by harsh treatment. On the establishment of the École Centrale, in 1795, they had no alternative but to send him there; and such was his quickness or diligence, that when the day arrived for the examinations in "grammaire générale," not one of the pupils could compete with him, and he received all the prizes that had been proposed.

During the four following years he sustained his reputation by carrying off all the first prizes in all the courses that he attended; and at the end of that time, in 1798, he concentrated his energies on mathematics for (according to M. Colomb) the strange reason that he had a horror of hypocrisy, and rightly judged that in mathematics it was impossible. A

more intelligible and more likely motive was his laudable ambition to be admitted into the Polytechnic School, for which he was about to become a candidate after much anxious preparation, when a sudden change took place in his prospects; and we find him in 1800, at the age of seventeen, a supernumerary in the ministry of war. He was indebted for this employment to the Daru family, which was distantly related to his own; and when, early in the same year, the two brothers Daru were despatched to Italy on public duty of an administrative kind, they invited Beyle to rejoin them there on the chance of some fitting occupation for him turning up. He made the journey from Geneva to Milan on horseback, following so close on the traces of the invading army, that he had to run the gauntlet before the fort of Bard, which, overlooked from its insignificance, had wellnigh frustrated the most brilliant of Napoleon's early campaigns at starting.

Our young adventurer entered Milan at the beginning of June, 1800; and, on the 14th of the same month, had the good fortune to be present, as an amateur, at the battle of Marengo. An armistice having been signed the next day, he took advantage of it to visit, in company with a son of General Melas, the Boromean Isles and the other remarkable objects in the vicinity. Hurried away, we suppose, by the military spirit which animated all around him, Beyle entered a regiment of dragoons as quartermaster; and, in the course of a month, received a commission as sub-lieutenant. He served for about half a year as aide-de-camp to General Michaud, and received the most flattering certificate of courage and conduct; but before the expiration of a year (on September 17th, 1801) he was ordered to rejoin his regiment, then in garrison at Savigliano, in Piedmont, in consequence of a regulation forbid-

ding any officer under the rank of lieutenant to be employed as aide-de-camp.

His life in a provincial town differed widely from that of the brilliant staff-officer, which, divided between Brescia and Bergamo, with frequent excursions to Milan and the Isles, and thickly sown, says his biographer, with various and romantic sensations, realised his conceptions of perfect happiness. So soon as the treaty of Amiens afforded him an honourable pretext for quitting an inactive and unexciting course of life in the army, he flung up his commission very much to the disgust of his patrons, and went to reside with his parents at Grenoble. Of course this experiment failed, but he made himself sufficiently disagreeable to extort an allowance of 150 francs a month from his father with leave to live at Paris, where, in June, 1807, he took up his elevated abode (*au cinquième*) in the Rue d'Angivilliers, and without seeking for introductions or aiming at immediate distinction, calmly and resolutely set about educating himself anew. Montesquieu, Montaigne, Cabanis, Destutt de Tracy, Say, J. J. Rousseau, were his favourite authors. He also made a careful study of Alfieri's tragedies; and out of his five francs a day he contrived to pay masters in English and fencing. He got on tolerably well in English, although his instructor was an Irishman with a touch of the brogue; but his skill with the foil was of so equivocal a description, that Renouvier, the director of the Salle Fabien, is reported to have given him nearly the same advice which was addressed to a British peer by a celebrated French fencing master, when his lordship was settling account with him at the conclusion of a long series of lessons at a napoleon per hour: "Milord, je vous conseille décidément d'abandonner les armes."

Beyle's figure was ill adapted for active exercises;

but his nerves, which grew tremulous at the slightest touch of emotion, were firm as steel in the presence of danger; his eye was good, and he attained to such proficiency with the pistol as to be able once, when anxious to display his skill, to bring down a bird upon the wing at forty yards' distance. The reputation thus acquired (perhaps by a happy accident) was far from useless for a man of his character, who was then daily liable to be called to account for the indiscreet indulgence of his peculiar humour. Towards the conclusion of his career he writes: "I ought to have been killed a dozen times for epigrams or *mots piquants* that cannot be forgotten; and yet I have received only three wounds,—two of which are of little consequence, those in the hand and the left foot." One of his maxims was, to seize the first occasion for a duel on entering life; and his recipe for a first duel, which he pronounced infallible, runs thus: "Whilst your adversary is taking his aim, look at a tree, and begin counting the leaves. One preoccupation will distract from another of a graver kind. Whilst taking aim yourself, recite two Latin verses; this will prevent you from firing too quickly, and neutralise that five per cent. of emotion which has sent so many balls twenty feet above the mark."

About this time (1803) Beyle formed the curious project of writing a comedy, in one act and in prose, to confute the critical canons of the celebrated Geoffroy. It was to be called "Quelle Horreur! Ou, l'ami du despotisme pervertisseur de l'opinion publique." He worked at it, from time to time, for ten or twelve years; and then definitively abandoned it. In 1805 he renewed the experiment of domestic life at Grenoble, which this time was curiously and characteristically interrupted. He fell in love with an actress; and, on her leaving Grenoble on a professional engagement for Marseilles, he pretended a sud-

den inclination for commerce, and became clerk to a Marseilles firm of dealers in colonial produce, with whom he remained a year, when the lady married a rich Russian magnate, and Beyle returned to Paris. Having contracted a fixed taste for intellectual pursuits, he was with difficulty persuaded by his friends, the Darus, to attach himself once more to their fortunes. He complied, however, and rejoined them in Germany, where he was present, as a non-combatant, at the battle of Jena and witnessed the triumphant entry of Napoleon into Berlin in 1806. A few days after this event, Count Daru (the father) procured for Beyle the place of *intendant* of the domains of the Emperor in Brunswick, which he held two years, profiting by his residence in the Duchy to study the German language and philosophy. Here, again, he gave signal proof of both moral and physical courage. He put down an insurrection in a town, the garrison of which had just quitted it, by the bold expedient of arming the invalid soldiers left behind in a hospital, and suddenly leading them against the crowd. An instance of his energy as an administrator is thus related by M. Mérimée:—

"According to his wonted mode of showing himself worse than he was, he affected to despise the enthusiasm that made the men of his epoch do such great things. 'We had the sacred fire,' he observed, 'and I among the rest, though unworthy. I had been sent to Brunswick, to levy an extraordinary contribution of five millions. I raised seven millions, and I narrowly escaped being torn in pieces by the populace, who were exasperated at the excess of my zeal. The Emperor inquired the name of the auditor who had so acted, and said 'C'est bien.'"

It would have been difficult to discover another auditor similarly circumstanced, who would have refrained from putting into his own pocket one, at least, of the two extra millions; and it is far from clear

that the Emperor would have trusted or respected him less on that account, so long as the imperial demands were fully answered. Napoleon commonly knew to a fraction the amount of the illicit gains of his functionaries, as the famous contractor Ouvrard discovered to his cost. This man was once foolish enough to bet that Mademoiselle Georges would sup with him instead of keeping her known engagement to sup, on a specified night, at the Tuileries. He overcame her scruples by a bribe of 200,000 francs, and won his wager. The day following, he was ordered to attend the Emperor, and was thus quietly addressed:—"M. Ouvrard, you have gained five millions by your contracts for the supply of the army in Spain: you will pay two into the imperial Treasury without delay." He paid therefore eighty thousand pounds for his *caprice* or vanity. This state of things and tone of feeling must be kept in mind in appreciating a man like Beyle, who, a confirmed voluptuary, after dealing with millions in times of commotion and confusion, died in exile because he could never muster capital enough to secure an annuity of 160*l.* a year.

In his capacity of auditor he was attached to the grand army during the invasion of Russia, and had his full share of the glories, dangers, and privations of the retreat. He was among the few, says M. Mérimée, who, on this trying occasion, never forfeited the respect of others. One day, not far from the Beresina, Beyle presented himself, shaved and carefully dressed, before his chief: "You have shaved as usual, I see," observed M. Daru; "you are a brave man (*un homme de cœur*)." In a letter from Moscow he has given one of the most graphic and picturesque accounts we are acquainted with of the fire. It concludes thus:—

"We left the city lighted up by the finest conflagration in the world, forming an immense pyramid, which, like the prayers of the faithful, had its base on earth and its summit in heaven. The moon appeared above this atmosphere of flame and smoke. It was an imposing spectacle, but one ought to have been alone, or surrounded by men of mind, to enjoy it. That which has spoilt the Russian campaign for me, is to have made it with people who would have commonplaced the Coliseum and the Bay of Naples."

He said he had not suffered so very much from hunger during the retreat, but found it impossible to recall to memory how he had procured food, or what he had eaten, with the exception of a lump of tallow, for which he paid twenty francs, and which he always recollected with delight. Before setting out on this expedition he deemed it prudent to take especial precautions against the want of ready money. His sister replaced all the buttons of a surtout by gold pieces of twenty and forty francs, covered with cloth. On his return she asked if this expedient had answered. He had never once thought of it since his departure. By dint of taxing his memory, he recalled a vague impression of having given the old surtout to the waiter of an inn near Wilna, with the gold buttons sewed up as at Paris. This incident, observes M. Colomb, is truly illustrative, for Beyle was excessively given to precaution, without a parallel for forgetfulness, and reckless to the last degree.

He abided faithfully by the declining fortunes of Napoleon, and did good service in the crisis of 1814; but he was destined never to enjoy the reward of his devotion; and when the crash came, he bore his ruin with so philosophical an air, that many superficial observers openly accused him of ingratitude and tergiversation. The best answer to such charges was his refusal to apply or lay himself out for office under

the restored monarchy, although a fair opening was managed for him by his friends.

In August, 1814, he left Paris for Milan, where he resided till 1821, with the exception of visits to Paris and London in 1817. At Milan he enjoyed in perfection the precise kind of life which suited him. The opera was a never-failing source of enjoyment; and there was no department of the fine arts from which he could not draw both instruction and amusement at will. The cosmopolite character of his taste may be inferred from the manner in which he speaks in a letter, dated October, 1818, of Viganò, the composer of ballets:—

"Every man who has an immense success in his own country is remarkable in the eyes of a philosopher. Viganò, I repeat, has had this success. For example, 4000 francs a year has been usually paid to the composers of ballets; he has 44,000 for 1819. A Parisian will exclaim, *Fi, l'horreur!* He may speak in good faith; only I shall add aside, so much the worse for him. If Viganò discovers the art of writing gestures and groups, I maintain, that in 1860, he will be more spoken of than Madame de Staël. Therefore I have a right to call him a great man, or at least, a very remarkable man, and superior, like Rossini or Canova, to all that you have at Paris in the fine arts or literature."

In another letter, in which he repeats and justifies this opinion, he says, "I pass my evenings with Rossini and Monti: all things considered, I prefer extraordinary men to ordinary ones." Amongst the extraordinary men with whom he associated on familiar terms at Milan was Lord Byron, who addressed the following letter to him in 1823. By M. Mérimée's kindness, we are enabled to give a literal copy, the italics included:—

"Genoa, May 29, 1823.

"Sir,—At present that I know to whom I am indebted for a very flattering mention in the '*Rome, Naples et Florence en* 1817,' by M. Stendahl, it is fit that I should return my

thanks (however undesired or undesirable) to Mr. Beyle, with whom I had the honour of being acquainted at Milan in 1816. You only did me too much honour in what you were pleased to say in that work; but it has hardly given me less pleasure than the praise itself, to become at length aware (which I have done by mere accident) that I am indebted for it to one of whose good opinion I am really ambitious. So many changes have taken place in the Milan circle, that I hardly dare recur to it; some dead, some banished, and some in the Austrian dungeons. Poor Pellico! I trust that in his iron solitude his muse is consoling him in part — one day to delight us again, when both she and her poet are restored to freedom.

"Of your works I have only seen '*Rome*' and the '*Lives of Haydn and Mozart*,' and the brochure on '*Racine and Shakespeare*.' The '*Histoire de la Peinture*' I have not yet the good fortune to possess. There is one part of your observations in the pamphlet which I shall venture to remark upon; it regards Walter Scott. You say that 'his character is little worthy of enthusiasm,' at the same time that you mention his productions in the manner they deserve. I have known Walter Scott long and well, and in occasional situations which call forth the *real* character, and I can assure you, that his character is worthy of admiration, — that of all men he is the most *open*, the most *honourable*, the most *amiable*. With his politics I have nothing to do; they differ from mine, which renders it difficult for me to speak of them. But he is *perfectly sincere* in them, — and sincerity may be *humble*, but she cannot *be servile*. I pray you therefore to correct or soften that passage. You may perhaps attribute this officiousness of mine to a false affectation of *candour*, as I happen to be a writer also. Attribute it to what motive you please, but *believe* the truth. I say that Walter Scott is as nearly a thorough good man as man can be, because I know it by experience to be the case.

"If you do me the favour of an answer, may I request a speedy one? because it is possible (though not yet decided) that circumstances may conduct me once more to Greece. My present address is Genoa, where an answer will reach me in a short time, or be forwarded to me wherever I may be. I beg you to believe me, with a lively recollection of our

brief acquaintance, and the hope of one day renewing it, your ever obliged and obedient humble servant,

"NOEL BYRON.

"P.S. I make no excuse for writing to you in English, as I understand you are well acquainted with that language."

"A Monsieur H. Beyle,
"Rue de Richelieu, No. 63, à Paris."

In March, 1818, Beyle writes thus to a friend who was anxious that he should become a candidate for office:

"Without hating any one, I have always been exquisitely abhorred by half of my official relations, &c. &c. To conclude, I like Italy. I pass from seven o'clock to midnight every evening in listening to music; the climate does the rest. Do you know that during the last six weeks we have been at 14° of Reaumur? Do you know that at Venice one lives like a gentleman for nine *lire* a day, and that the Venetian lira is fifty centimes. I shall live a year or two longer at Milan, then as much at Venice, and then in 1821, pressed by misfortune, I shall go to Cularo; I shall sell the apartment, for which I was offered 10,000 francs this year, and I shall try my fortune at Paris."

By a strange coincidence of untoward events, which could not have been so much as guessed when this plan of life was sketched, he was eventually compelled to adhere to it. His father died in the course of the following year (June, 1819), and left him less than half of the 100,000 francs on which he had calculated; and in July, 1820, he writes to announce "the greatest misfortune that could happen to him," —"the hardest blow he had ever received in his life." A report had got about, and was generally credited at Milan, that he was a secret agent of the French Government. "It has been circulating for six months. I observed that many persons tried to avoid saluting me: I cared little about this, when the

kind Plana wrote me the letter which I enclose. I am not angry with him; yet here is a terrible blow. For, after all, what is this Frenchman doing here? Milanese simplicity will never be able to comprehend my philosophic life, and that I live here, on five thousand francs, better than at Paris on twelve thousand." He had partly himself to blame for this disagreeable position; for he was fond of mystifying people by playing tricks with his name, or by adopting odd names and signatures, as well as by giving counterfeit, shifting, and contradictory descriptions of his birth, rank, and profession. Madame Ancelot (*Les Salons de Paris*) relates that he made it a condition, on accepting an invitation to one of her soirées, that he should come under any name he chose. He was announced as M. Cæsar Bombay, and mystified her friends by describing himself as purveyor of cotton nightcaps and stockings to the army, which, he said, was a higher and more useful vocation than man of letters. In his "Mémoires d'un Touriste," he assumes the character of an ironmaster.

"When," says M. Colomb, "he had to give his address to a tailor or bootmaker, it was rarely that he gave his real name. This led to *quid pro quos* which amused him. Thus, he was inquired for by turns under the names of Bel, Beil, Bell, Lebel, &c. As to his profession, it depended on the caprice of the moment. At Milan he gave himself out for a superior officer of dragoons who had obtained his discharge in 1814, and son of a general of artillery. All these little inventions were but jokes; he never derived any advantage from them beyond a little amusement."

This excuse might have been partially admissible if, in the aristocratic society of Milan, he had given himself out for an ex-corporal and the son of a tailor; but the assumption of a superior grade and higher birth savours strongly of a censurable amount of petty vanity; and such tricks were the height of

folly in a town like Milan, where both the governing and the governed were naturally prone to suspect treachery.

Whilst he was yet hesitating what course to pursue, the police settled the matter by summarily ordering him to leave the Austrian territory, upon the gratuitous supposition that he was affiliated to the sect of Carbonari. From 1821 to 1830, he resided at Paris, where he was an established member of the circles which comprised the leading notabilities of the period, male and female:

"It is from this epoch," says M. Colomb, "that his reputation as *homme d'esprit*, and *conteur agréable* (both these terms are untranslatable) dates. Society listened with pleasure — with a sustained interest — to that multitude of anecdotes which his vast memory and his lively imagination produced under a graceful, coloured, original form. People recognised in the narrator the man who had studied and seen much, and observed with acuteness. Across the profound changes undergone by the *salon* life since 1789, he recalled attention, in a limited degree, to the taste which reigned at that time amongst those who guided it; he succeeded in generalising the conversation, — a difficult and almost disused thing in our days, when, if three people are gathered together, there are two conversations proceeding simultaneously without any connexion; when *routs* resemble public places open to all comers, and where about as much *esprit* is consumed as at a costume ball, composed of persons who see each other for the first time. Beyle's agreeability frequently enabled him to triumph over all the dissolvents which tend to destroy French society."

And a very great triumph it was, if we consider the period and the angry passions which then divided the company he thus contrived to amalgamate by the introduction of well-chosen topics, by his felicitous mode of treating them, by his varied knowledge, his lively fancy, and his tact. The reason why M. Colomb is obliged to go back to a period antecedent

to 1789 for his model of drawing-room life, is, that the French thenceforth ceased to be the gay, laughing, pleasure-seeking nation of which we have read or heard traditionally. Serious practical politics are a sad drawback to lively and clever conversation, not merely because any dull fellow can bawl out the commonplaces of his party, but because the easy interchange of mind is impeded, and our thoughts are constantly reverting, in our own despite, to the absorbing and beaten questions of the hour. But the buoyant spirits and elastic energies of a rising generation cannot be kept down. The struggle of a new school of authors or artists with a declining or superannuated one, affords ample scope for the display of wit, taste, and acquirement; and the contest between classicism and romanticism, which raged furiously during the last years of the Restoration, was admirably adapted to the genius of a Beyle.

There can hardly be a fairer test of the position held by a man in his own country than the contemporary impression of an enlightened foreigner. In her "France in 1829–1830," Lady Morgan describes "the brilliant Beyle" as the central figure of a group of notabilities at her hotel; and his *nom de guerre* figures thus with her ladyship's name in one of Viennet's versified epistles:—

> "Stendhal, Morgan, Schlegel,—ne vous effrayez pas,
> Muses, ce sont des noms fameux dans nos climats,
> Chefs de la Propagande, ardens missionaires,
> Parlant de Romantique, et prêchant ses mystères."

It is elsewhere recorded of him, that, besides talking well himself, he contributed largely to the social pleasures of the circles in which he mixed, by leading others to talk, and by bringing persons of congenial minds together.

"A party of eight or ten agreeable persons," he writes, "where the conversation is gay and anecdotic, and where

weak punch is handed round at half-past twelve, is the place in the world where I enjoy myself most. There, in my element, I infinitely prefer hearing others talk to talking myself. I readily sink back into the silence of happiness; and if I talk, it is only to pay my ticket of admission."

He named half-past twelve at night because the steady, regular, formal people are wont to retire before that time, and the field is pretty sure to be left free to those who live for intellectual intercourse, and love it for its own sake, instead of hurrying to crowd after crowd to proclaim their importance, gratify their vanity, or parade their tiresomeness. He insisted on anecdotes, facts, and incidents, in contradistinction to the vague, the declamatory, and the abstract style of conversation, — that trick of phrasemaking, as he termed it, which (in common with Byron) he detected and detested in "Corinne." Madame Pasta happening to say one evening of love, "C'est une tuile qui vous tombe sur la tête;" "Add," said Beyle, "'comme vous passez dans la vie,' and then you will speak like Madame de Staël, and people will pay attention to your remark."

In an existence like Beyle's, as in a Rembrandt picture, the bright parts stand out in broad contrast to the surrounding intensity of shade —

> "Dearly bought the hidden treasure,
> Finer feelings can bestow;
> Hearts that vibrate sweetest pleasure
> Thrill the deepest notes of woe."

"My sensibility," he writes, shortly before his death, has become too acute. What does but graze others, wounds me to the quick. Such was I in 1799; such I am still in 1840. But I have learnt to hide all this under irony imperceptible to the common herd." We suspect that his sensibility somewhat resembled that of Rousseau, who, whilst laying down rules for

the education of children in "Emile," suffered his own offspring to be brought up at a foundling hospital; or that of Sterne, who, it is alleged, neglected a dying mother to indulge in pathos over a dead donkey. In the midst of his social triumphs, Beyle more than once meditated suicide; and on one occasion, in 1828, he appears to have been driven to despair by the remissness of an English publisher, who had omitted to pay him for some articles which he had contributed to a London magazine. Under these circumstances, we can hardly wonder that the prospect of an independence induced him to accept the consulship of Trieste, which was obtained for him in September 1830, by the friends who had thriven on the revolution of July.

They have been censured for not doing more for him; but it should be remembered that a party is a combination of persons who unite their talents and resources upon an understanding that, in case of success, the power and patronage thereby acquired shall be shared amongst them. There is nothing necessarily wrong in such a league, because those forming it may fairly claim credit for confidence in one another's honesty and capacity as well as for having fixed principles of policy to carry out; and the leaders have no right to gratify their private feelings at the expense of their supporters. Now Beyle took no part in the proceedings which resulted in the temporary establishment of the Orleans dynasty upon the throne. He had encountered no danger, and was entitled to no reward. Nay, he had just before been in confidential communication with the Polignac ministry on the delicate subject of the Roman Conclave. He had made himself extremely useful, and was naturally looking forward to his reward from them. So far as his influence went, it had been exerted to depreciate and discourage the exertions of the Liberal party. "France," he had said some time

Balzac, "is on the high road to happiness. If they try to make her take the short cuts, they will upset the coach." The remark was prophetic, and does credit to his penetration.

He was supremely miserable at Trieste, and, fortunately for him, Prince Metternich refused to sanction the appointment; so he was transferred to Civita Vecchia, which was an improvement, as admitting of frequent excursions to Rome. But his letters are as full as ever of longings for Parisian life.

"What a perspective," he exclaims, "not to see the intellectual people of Paris more than two or three times before I die! I was at a charming dinner yesterday, the finest place in the neighbourhood,—trees, a fresh breeze, and thirty-three guests, who felt honoured by the presence of a consul; but not an idea, not a touch of depth or refinement. Am I destined to die surrounded by *bêtes?* It looks very like it. I am sought after; I enjoy some consideration; I have the best slice of a fish weighing fourteen pounds, the best of its kind. I had an excellent horse, which did the five miles and a half in three quarters of an hour, yet I am perishing of ennui. How many cold characters, how many geometricians, would be happy, or, at least, tranquil and satisfied, in my place! But my soul is a fire, which dies out if it does not flame up. I require three or four cubic feet of new ideas per day, as a steam-boat requires coal."

The utmost indulgence he could obtain was leave of absence, purchased by the sacrifice of half his salary, from 1836 to 1839. In 1838 he came to London, and (according to M. Colomb) struck up a passing intimacy with Theodore Hook at the Athenæum Club. In March, 1839, on the retirement of M. Molé from the Presidency of the Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beyle reluctantly resumed his official duties at Civita Vecchia. His health began to break, and he returned to Paris for medical advice in 1841. On the 22nd of March, 1842, he was struck with apoplexy in the Rue Neuve des Capucines, close to

the door of the Foreign Office. He was carried to his lodging in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, where he expired at two o'clock the next morning, without having uttered a word, and apparently without pain, in the sixtieth year of his age. He was buried in the Cemetery of Montmartre (du Nord), and the following inscription was placed by his own express directions upon his monument: "Arrigo Beyle, Milanese, Scrisse, Amò, Visse. Ann. 59, M. 2. Morì 2. 23. Marzo, M.D.CCC.XLII. (Henry Beyle, Milanese, Wrote, Loved, Lived. 59 years and 2 months. He died at two A.M. on the 23rd March, 1842.)"

According to Beyle's own philosophical creed, which referred everything to self, he wrote, and loved, and lived in vain; for his writings were unprofitable, his loves were unprosperous, and his life was an unhappy one. It will not be uninstructive, nor beside the purpose, to trace and analyse the more recondite causes of these results.

Miss Edgeworth wrote the story of "Murad the Unlucky," to prove that what is popularly called ill-luck is simply another name for imprudence, and that we have commonly ourselves to thank for our success or ill-success in life. Beyle's career might be plausibly adduced either for or against her argument. It was undeniably ill-luck that two dynasties should be successively upset just as he had established a claim on each respectively. His acknowledged merits very far exceeded those of many by whom he was distanced in the race; and on five or six occasions he strikingly distinguished himself, yet his good hits did little or nothing for his advancement. Fortune, therefore, clearly had something to do with his disappointments; yet we are disposed to think that his avowed incapacity for biding his time was the main cause of most of them. In the worldly struggle, passive endurance

is no less useful than active energy; and patience under annoyance, or perseverance in uncongenial employments, has again and again proved ambition's best ladder. Beyle was the most impatient and least tolerant of human beings. Whenever an occupation ceased to interest him, he abandoned it; the moment his acquaintance failed to amuse, he fled from them. He deemed ennui the greatest of earthly evils, and a bore the worst of criminals. Armed with medical and legal authorities to the effect that death might be produced by ennui, and that the means by which it was illegally inflicted were immaterial in a judicial point of view, the Duc de Laraguais formally prosecuted a famous Parisian bore for an attempt upon his life. If Beyle had been the judge, he would have broken the accused upon the wheel without mercy or compunction. He was not wholly without excuse, for, when suffering from ennui, he underwent a complete prostration of his moral and physical faculties.

Another of his confirmed antipathies, if more excusable, was not less formidable as an obstacle or dangerous as a stumbling-block.

"Three or four times," he writes, in his fifty-sixth year, "fortune has knocked at my door. In 1814 it only rested with myself to be named Prefect of Mans, or Director-general of Corn Imports at Paris under the orders of Count Beugnot; but I was frightened at the number of platitudes and half-meannesses imposed daily on the public functionaries of all classes. . . . When I see a man strutting about in a room with a number of orders at his buttonhole, I involuntarily reckon up the number of paltry actions, of degrading submissions, and often of black treasons, that he must have accumulated to have received so many certificates of them."

This may remind the reader of Selwyn's remark on a silver dinner service, at the sale of the effects of Mr. Pelham, the Minister: "How many toads have been eaten off these plates!"

Beyle rivalled or outdid Swift in his "hate of folly" and his "scorn of fools," and took no pains to conceal his aversion or contempt. At the same time (like Sydney Smith with his "foolometer") he fully appreciated the importance of this very numerous and very influential corporation. Thus when maintaining the cause of the Romantic School against the Classicists, he says —

"Never, in the memory of historians, did nation undergo in its manners and its pleasures a more rapid and entire change than that from 1780 to 1823, and people wish to give us the same literature! Let our grave adversaries look round them; the fool (*sot*) of 1780 produced stupid and insipid pleasantries; he was always laughing; the fool of 1823 produces philosophic reasonings, — vague, hackneyed, sleep-inspiring; his face is constantly elongated. Here is a notable revolution. A society in which an element so essential and so abundant as the fool is changed to this extent, cannot support either the same comic or the same pathetic: then everybody aimed at making his neighbour laugh; now everybody wishes to pick his neighbour's pocket."

We have already quoted his confession of an incurable tendency to produce enmity by his sarcasms. A man who habitually indulges in this mode of talking and writing may be esteemed for his manly spirit, his independent bearing, his moral and physical courage, or his uncompromising integrity, but he will rarely succeed as a place-hunter.

Beyle's irreligion is not offensively paraded in the works published under his own eye in his lifetime; but the state of his mind in this respect is repulsively exhibited in three or four passages of the "Correspondance Inédite." His friend Mérimée describes him as a confirmed infidel and an "outrageous materialist;" nor, after fully allowing for his reckless habit of making himself appear worse than he was to shock

grave people, can it be doubted that his entire mind and character were underlaid and pervaded by a cold, hard, ingrained and ineradicable system of disbelief. In the false pride of his mistaken logic, he fearlessly pushed his creed, or no-creed, to its extreme consequences. Denying Providence, he denied moral responsibility: and he regarded human beings as puppets, meant for nothing higher or better than to play a sorry or ridiculous part on the stage of life, where all their motions are regulated by the strings of egotism. According to Mérimée, he could never be persuaded that what he thought false, could be deemed credible by others; and he put no faith in the sincerity of the devout. This extent of scepticism, assuming it to be genuine, implies a degree of blindness, of ignorance, of downright fatuity, that seems utterly irreconcilable with his proved strength of understanding, his varied commerce with the world, and his acknowledged sagacity. To borrow the language which would have been best adapted to his apprehension, it was worse than a crime, it was a blunder. His assumed skill in penetrating to the springs of human action and his boasted logic, one or both of them, were at fault; and we need look no farther for the explanation of his disappointments or his despondency.

He is admitted on all hands to have been a man of strict honour and scrupulous integrity. M. Colomb adds, that few have had more devoted friends than Beyle, although he was culpably prone to neglect their interests as well as his own. This raises a fresh difficulty; for, generally speaking, no bad quality or vice carries its appropriate punishment along with it more surely than heartlessness. If we do not trust others, they will not trust us; and if we have no faith in friendship, we neither deserve nor acquire friends. What is worse, we forfeit our best source

of consolation when we throw away hope; and we canker happiness in the bud when we kill enthusiasm:

> "Like following life in creatures we dissect,
> We lose it in the moment we detect."

In one of Beyle's letters he speaks of himself as simultaneously conscious of two states of being, — the sentient and the observant or reasoning; and we can fancy him like the hero in "Used Up" (*L'Homme Blasé*), who, in momentary expectation of a strong excitement, takes out his watch to count the beatings of his pulse. This constant practice of mental analysis may refine the perceptive powers, or sharpen the logical faculty, or supply materials for psychological study, but it chills the imagination, and induces an undue preference for sensual pleasures as the most solid or the least evanescent sources of enjoyment. Such was one of its effects on Beyle, who combined pruriency of fancy with delicacy of thought, and (no very rare occurrence) was at the same time sentimental, and what the late Lord Ponsonby used to call *flesh*imental. Another of its effects, not less marked, was to inspire him with a morbid dislike to verse, although he showed admirable discrimination in selecting beautiful passages from Shakspeare and Dante.

The reader will have observed that the combination of qualities which we have described in Beyle, belong rather to the analytical than to the creative order of mind, and entitle their possessor to rank higher as a critic or metaphysician than as a writer of fiction. It is the very essence of sound criticism to trace impressions to their source; but the poet, the dramatist, and the novelist (or writer of prose epics) must be swept along by the glowing stream of their own composition, or the public will look on indifferently or not notice them at all. In the case of

the author before us, precisely what we should have anticipated from *à priori* reasoning, has come to pass. The only works of his which acquired any share of popularity on their first appearance were "Rome, Naples, and Florence" (1817); "Racine et Shakspeare" (1823); and the "Life of Rossini" (1823). Beyle was passionately fond of music. When he wrote on it, he was hurried away by his subject; and the first of these three works may be described as a musical tour. The "Life of Rossini" speaks for itself; and "Racine and Shakspeare" was an exclusively critical production, thrown off upon a sudden impulse in the height of an exciting controversy. Such an occasion was eminently favourable to the display of his peculiar talents; and he was saved, in his own despite, from the fatal error of writing, or affecting to write, for a contemporary public of exceedingly narrow dimensions, or for a larger one that was to begin studying him in right earnest, and in a becoming spirit, about 1880.

It is stated in an English book of travels (by the writer), printed for private circulation, that Manzoni, "half in earnest, avowed it to be his creed, that as society became more enlightened, it would tolerate no such thing as literature considered merely as a creation of art." Beyle too frequently acted on the hypothesis that this stage of progressive improvement had been reached already, or was sure to be reached very shortly; for he takes little pains to develope, or even to separate, his ideas, thoughts and images, when they crowd upon him. When the expression is irreproachable in respect of clearness, the odds are that the arrangement is faulty, or that the form is such as to create an inadequate impression of the work. We do not remember another instance in which so much curious information and masterly criticism, so much varied and valuable matter of all sorts, is presented in

so loose, scattered, unpretending, and unattractive a shape as in his "Promenades dans Rome." His friends allege that it was his dislike to Madame de Staël, and his horror of what he thought the sickly sentimentalities and pompous platitudes of "Corinne," that hurried him into the opposite extreme of putting forth two volumes of Notes.

"Whatever negligence may be found in his works," says M. Mérimée, "these were not the less laboriously worked up. All his books were copied several times before being delivered to the printer; but his corrections were not of style. He always wrote fast, changing his thought, and troubling himself little about the form. He had even a contempt for style, and maintained that an author had attained perfection when readers remembered his ideas without being able to recall his phrases." Just so it has been observed that the best dressed person is one who leaves a general impression of ease and elegance; or, as Brummel put it, if John Bull stops to look at you, you are not well dressed, but too stiff, too tight, or too fashionable. M. Thiers, again, in the eloquent Preface to his concluding volumes, compares a perfect style to glass, which we look through without being conscious of its presence between the object and the eye. These respective points of excellence, however, are not attained when the dress conveys an impression of awkwardness, when the glass troubles the view, or when the style repels readers and degrades, instead of elevating, the thought. Nor are they often attained without labour; and it has been pointedly observed that the "Ramblers" of Dr. Johnson, elaborate as they appear, were written rapidly and seldom underwent revision; whilst the simple language of Rousseau, which seems to come flowing from the heart, was the slow production of painful toil, pausing on every word, and balancing

every sentence. Balzac concludes his fervent eulogy of Beyle by protesting against his "habitudes de sphinx;" and says of the style of his best work, "he writes very much in the style of Diderot, who was not a writer; but the conception is grand and powerful, the thought is original, and often well rendered. This system is not to be held up to imitation. It would be too dangerous to let authors believe themselves profound thinkers." It would certainly be too dangerous to let them set up for so many Benthams, and depend upon a corresponding supply of Dumonts to translate or interpret them.

In a letter to M. Colomb, Balzac adds: "Beyle is one of the most remarkable spirits of the age; but he has not paid sufficient attention to form: he wrote as the birds sing, and our language is a sort of Madame Honesta, who finds no good in anything that is not irreproachable. I am deeply grieved at his sudden death; the pruning-knife should have been carried into the 'Chartreuse de Parme,' and a second edition would have made a complete and irreproachable work of it. In any case it is a wonderful production, *le livre des esprits distingués*."

We concur with M. Balzac to the extent of thinking the "Chartreuse de Parme" a very remarkable book, which may be fairly taken as Beyle's masterpiece in the department of fiction. We shall, therefore, endeavour to convey some notion of it by a rude outline of the plot and a few extracts.

The time is the first quarter of the present century. The scene is laid at Milan and Parma. The heroine (Gina, the abbreviation of Angelina) is a Milanese of high birth, surpassing beauty, indomitable energy, and morals of that elastic and accommodating order that never stand in the way of her preferment or her caprice. The hero Fabricio, her nephew, is a good-looking, gallant, and gifted scapegrace, a sort of Ita-

lian Tom Jones, who is constantly getting himself and his patrons into difficulty by indulging the impulse of the moment. His aunt is attached to him with an intensity of affectionate interest that might have ended in a scandal of the worst kind, had it been reciprocated, which it is not; and she herself is represented as never wilfully cherishing an irregular or guilty wish. The most important of the *dramatis personæ*, after these two, are the reigning Prince of Parma, Ernest IV., and his prime minister, the Count Mosca della Rovere. More than a hundred pages are occupied in laying the train by details of Fabricio's youthful adventures and the early life of Gina, of which a single incident may suffice. Her husband, the Count Pietranera, having been killed in a duel, she intimates to her principal adorer her sovereign will and pleasure that he should pursue the successful combatant and revenge the death of her lost lord. He hesitates, and she sends him the following billet: —

"Voulez-vous agir une fois en homme d'esprit? Figurez-vous que vous ne m'avez jamais connue. Je suis, avec un peu de mépris peut-être, votre très-humble servante,

"GINA PIETRANERA."

Refusing the most splendid offers, she takes up her abode in a fifth story, with the avowed intention of living on a pension of 1500 francs a year. The Count Mosca sees her at La Scala, and falls desperately in love with her. "He was then between forty and forty-five years of age: he had marked features, no appearance of pretension, and a gay, simple air, which predisposed in his favour. He would have been very good-looking still, if a whim of his prince had not obliged him to wear powder as a pledge of sound political opinions." He consoles himself for the advance of years by the reflection that "age, after all, is but the inability to give oneself up to those

delicious tremblings and emotions;" and, encouraged by the Countess's smiles, he at length makes his proposals, which are not exactly what the French ladies call *pour le bon motif*. Like a late lamented English statesman, he explains that there are three courses open. He would fling ambition to the winds, and live with her at Milan, Florence, or Naples, on the wreck of his fortune; or she might settle at Parma, where he could insure her a place about the Court —

"'But,' he continues, 'there is one capital objection. The prince is devout, and, as you are aware, it is my fate to be married. The result would be a million of annoyances. You are a widow; it is an excellent position, which you must exchange for another, and this is the object of my third plan. A new and accommodating husband might be found. But it is essential that he should be of an advanced age, for why should you refuse me the hope of replacing him at some future day? Well, I have concluded this singular affair with the Duc Sanseverina-Taxis, who of course does not know the name of his future duchess. All he knows is that she is to make him ambassador, and confer on him a grand cross that his father had, and the want of which renders him the most miserable of mortals. Allowing for this weakness, the Duc is not too much of a simpleton. He has his clothes and perukes from Paris. He is by no means the sort of man to commit intentional depravity; he seriously believes that honour consists in having a cross; and he is ashamed of his wealth. He came to me a year ago to propose to found a hospital to gain this cross. I laughed at him, but he did not laugh at me when I proposed a marriage; my first condition, I need hardly say, being that he should never set foot in Parma again.'

"'But are you aware,' interrupted the Countess, 'that what you are proposing to me is very immoral?'

"'Not more immoral than what has been done in our Court and twenty others. There is this convenience in absolute power, that it sanctifies everything in the eyes of the governed; and can that which is seen by no one be a blot? Our policy, for twenty years, bids fair to consist in the fear of Jacobinism: and what a fear! Every year we shall fancy

ourselves on the eve of '93. You will hear, I hope, the phrases I am in the habit of declaiming on that topic, at my receptions. They are grand. Everything that may diminish this fear a little will be supremely moral in the eyes of the noble and the devout. Now, at Parma, everything that is not noble or devout is in prison or preparing to go there; and you may be well assured that this marriage will not appear singular amongst us before the day of my disgrace.'"

Three months afterwards, the new Duchess Sanseverina Taxis was the cynosure of every eye and the observed of all observers at the Court of Parma, where the Prince, whose portrait is a masterpiece, soon seeks to displace and replace his minister. On one of her Thursday receptions, he could not resist the temptation of going in defiance of etiquette, and the following colloquy arises:

"'But if I accept your Highness's attentions,' observed the Countess, laughing, 'with what face should I dare to reappear before the Count?' 'I should be almost as much out of countenance as you,' replied his Highness. 'The dear Count! my friend! But this is an embarrassment very easy to evade, and one on which I have been thinking,—the Count would be sent to the citadel for the remainder of his days.'"

She exerts her influence to make him pay a visit to his wife, an event which electrifies the Court—

"This Prince was not a wicked man, whatever the liberals of Italy may say of him. To be sure, he had thrown a good many of them into prison; but it was from fear; and he sometimes repeated, as if to console himself for certain reminiscences, that it is better to kill the devil than for the devil to kill us. The day after the *soirée* of which we have been speaking, he was in the highest spirits; he had done two good actions,—gone to the Duchess's Thursday, and spoken to his wife."

The rivalry of their confiding master and friend a little disturbs the domestic felicity of this exemplary

pair, but still their grand cause of anxiety is Fabricio; and it is at length resolved between them that the proper vocation for a young man of family, suspected of liberalism and more than suspected of libertinism, is the Church. The young man refuses at first, but his scruples are overcome by an appeal to the example of his ancestors.

"'What a mistake!' (he had thoughts of enlisting in the army of the United States), remonstrates his aunt. 'You will see no war, and you will relapse into the tavern-life, only without elegance, without music, without love. Trust me, American life would be dull work for you or me.' She explained to him the worship of the god dollar, and the respect that must be shown for the workpeople in the streets, who decide everything by their votes. 'Before turning yourself into a policeman in uniform, reflect well that we are not talking of your becoming a poor priest, more or less virtuous and exemplary, like the Abbé Blanès (his tutor). Remember that your uncles were archbishops of Parma. Read over again the notices of their lives in the supplement to the genealogy. Above all, it becomes the bearer of an illustrious name to be *grand seigneur*, noble, generous, protector of justice, destined beforehand to find himself at the head of his order, and in all his life to be guilty of only one act of knavery, but that one very useful.'"

Talleyrand (whose choice of his original profession was probably influenced by similar considerations), when Rulhières said he had been guilty of only one wickedness in his life, asked "When will it end?" There was more in this repartee than its readiness or its point; for there are mean, wicked and degrading actions which never do end, and which colour the entire current of a life. Fabricio, loose as he is, has a vague instinct that he is about to commit one of these, but his scruples are overcome by the Duchess, and he consents with a sigh to become a Monsignore.

The Count's parting advice to his *protégé* is not

quite equal to that given by Polonius to Laertes, but it is in strict keeping with the part.

"'If we are dismissed,' said the Duchess, 'we will rejoin you at Naples. But since you accept, till the new order of things, the proposal of the violet stockings, the Count, who thoroughly understands Italy as it is, has charged me with an idea for you. Believe or disbelieve what you will be taught, but never raise an objection. Fancy to yourself that you are learning the rules of whist; would you raise objections to the rules of whist? I have told the Count that you are a believer, and he is glad of it; this is useful both in this world and the next. But if you believe, do not fall into the vulgarity of speaking with horror of Voltaire, Diderot, Raynal, and all those crackbrained Frenchmen, precursors of the two Chambers. Let those names be rarely in your mouth; but when you must speak of them, speak of them with calm irony: they are people who have been refuted long since, and whose attacks are no longer of any consequence. Believe blindly whatever you are told at the Academy. Reflect that your least objections will be noted down; you will be pardoned a little intrigue of gallantry well managed, but not a doubt: *age suppresses intrigue and augments doubt.*'

"'The second idea that the Count sends you is this,— If you happen to think of a brilliant argument, a victorious repartee, which changes the course of the conversation, do not yield to the temptation of shining,— be silent; people of discernment will see your mental superiority in your eyes. It will be time enough to have *esprit* when you are a bishop.'"

How far Fabricio had benefitted by these instructions may be inferred from his first interview with the Prince on the completion of his Neapolitan training for the priesthood: —

"'Well, Monsignor,' began the Prince, 'are the people of Naples happy? Is the King beloved?' 'Serene Highness,' replied Fabricio, without an instant's hesitation, 'I admired, in passing through the streets, the excellent bearing of the soldiers of the different regiments of His Majesty;

the good society of Naples is respectful towards its masters, as it ought to be, but I will fairly own that in all my life I never suffered people of the lower classes to speak to me of anything but the work for which I paid them.' '*Peste*,' said the Prince to himself, 'what unction! this is all in the Sanssverina style.' Was it possible to repeat more closely the lessons of the aunt? I fancied I heard her speaking. If there was a revolution in my States, she would edit the "Moniteur," like the San-Felice at Naples. But the San-Felice, despite her beauty, and her twenty-five years, was hanged; a warning to over-clever ladies."

The Duchess narrowly escapes sharing the fate of La San-Felice. The nephew kills a man in self-defence. He is accused of murder; and henceforth the main interest of the plot turns on the struggles of the aunt to save him from his persecutors, who are secretly set on by the Prince, and to make him an archbishop in defiance of them. The most conspicuous among her adversaries is the minister of police, Rossi, and the least scrupulous of her tools is the republican enthusiast, Palla Ferrante, who robs on the highway to pay for the printing of his democratic tracts, and, whilst daily risking his life for liberty, is made the slave of an aristocratic beauty by a smile. Palla Ferrante, says Balzac, "is the type of a family of Italian spirits, sincere but misled, full of talent but ignorant of the fatal effects of their doctrine. Send them, ye ministers of absolute princes, with plenty of money, to France (*i. e.* in 1840) and to the United States. Instead of persecuting them, let them enlighten themselves. They will soon say, like Alfieri in 1793, 'The little at their work reconcile me to the great.'"

We agree with the same acute critic, that the commencement should have been abridged, and that the curtain should have fallen on the death of the Prince, although the loves of Fabricio and Clelia form one of the finest satires in the book. When the following

interview takes place, Fabricio is archbishop of Parma, a popular preacher, and supposed (as is the lady) to be living in the odour of sanctity. He is admitted into an orangery, and finds himself before a barred window. A hand is extended to meet him, and a soft voice announces, *C'est moi*—

"'I have made a vow to the Madonna, as you know, never to see you; this is the reason why I receive you in this profound darkness. I wish you to understand that if ever you force me to see you in broad daylight, everything between us will be at an end. But, in the first place, I do not choose you to preach before Anetta Marini.'

"'My angel, I will never preach again before any one. I only preached in the hope of seeing you.'

"'Do not speak thus; remember that it is not allowable for me to see you.'

[Here we request permission to overleap a space of three years.]

"The Marchioness had a charming little boy, about two years old, Sandrino, who was always with her, or on the knees of the Marquis, her husband. During the long hours of each day when she could not see her friend, the presence of Sandrino consoled her; for we have to confess a thing which will seem odd north of the Alps, she had remained faithful to her vow; she had promised the Madonna *never to see* Fabricio; such had been her very words, consequently she never received him but at night, and there was never a light in the apartment."

Balzac insists that the Count Mosca is meant for Prince Metternich, and that for Parma we should read Modena. Beyle denied that he had copied any living or contemporary original, male or female. He argues that his scene could not have been laid in one of the great courts on account of the details of administration. "There remained the little princes of Germany and Italy. But the Germans are so prostrate before a riband, they are so *bêtes*. I passed many years amongst them, and have forgotten their

language from contempt. You will see that my personages could not be Germans. If you follow this idea, you will find that I have been led by the hand to an extinct dynasty, to a Farnese, the least obscure of these extincts, by reason of the General, his grandfather." . . . "I have never seen Madame Belgioso. Rossi was a German. I have spoken to him a hundred times. I learnt 'The Prince' during my residences at St. Cloud in 1810 and 1811."

Schiller, in "Cabal und Liebe," and Lessing, in "Emilia Galotti," have each painted a petty despot, with the resulting demoralisation of all within his sphere, in still darker colours; but they wrote before the Great Revolution of 1789, which permanently altered the tone and limited the social effects of despotism, great or small. Although oppression and corruption may be as rife as ever, and iniquitous sentences may be procured as easily in the actual Naples as in the Parma of the novelist, the modern tools and satellites of tyranny are more rogues than fools; they are no unhesitating believers in right divine; their reverence for white staves and gold sticks is founded rather on calculation than on faith; and they no longer (except a few of the very silliest) talk of themselves, even amongst themselves, as privileged to indulge their vices at the expense of the non-noble classes with impunity. We doubt whether at any time since the commencement of the nineteenth century, a clever woman, like the Duchess, would have treated as an absurdity the notion of a del Dongo being prosecuted for killing a Giletti, or whether any Pope within living memory would have been induced to sanction Fabricio's elevation to the archbishopric. Every objection of this sort, however, might have been obviated by carrying the plot back to the period when Dubois received his cardinal's hat, or even to that when Talleyrand was made a bishop,

and when a gentleman was expected to suppress the insolence of the canaille by the infliction of instant death. Thus, Edgeworth relates in his "Memoirs," that once when he was riding with a lady in the south of France, some coarse expressions were addressed to her, or in her hearing, by a peasant, whom Edgeworth forthwith horsewhipped and rolled into the ditch. Shortly afterwards he found himself coldly received by the aristocracy of the neighbourhood, and learnt, on inquiring the cause, that he was thought to have been wanting in proper spirit, and that it was his duty to run his sword through the fellow's body on the spot.

In the "Promenades dans Rome," and in the "Correspondance Inédite," may be found authentic examples by the dozen of crimes committed under the influence of jealousy, in which the criminal invariably had public opinion on his side. Beyle's experience of Italian society, as it existed in the first quarter of the present century, if it does not so exist still, had satisfied him that in Italy no offences against good feeling and morality were so unnatural as to lie altogether beyond the bounds of probability; and he constructed this singular tale from examples which had doubtless past before his eyes. But he has caricatured Italian depravity. Although parallels should be found for every individual act of villany, meanness, or immorality, there is no getting over the improbability or the repulsiveness of the universal corruption of the *dramatis personæ* as a whole. Not one of them has the smallest consciousness of a principle, or of a well-defined difference between right and wrong. The best, or (more correctly speaking) the least bad, are mere creatures of impulse; and it may fairly be made a question whether such a society could have been held together under such a government, even with a friendly and powerful despot to

prop it up. In fact, Beyle seems to have invented a race of men and women to square with his own theory of materialism, and to have shaped his story with an exclusive view to their idiosyncrasy. Much ingenuity has been displayed in contriving forced scenes for the development of their peculiarities, whilst strokes of refined irony, witty remarks, and clever sketches, are found in sufficient number to give a tempting flavour to the book; but the plot drags and bewilders, and the characters inspire no interest, because they want vitality, and because (like Swift's Yahoos) they are an outrage on nature and on truth. The intended moral of the book is thus stated by the author: —

"From all this, the moral to be drawn is, that the man who approaches the court, compromises his happiness, if he be happy, and in every case makes his future destiny depend on the intrigues of a *femme de chambre*. On the other side, in America, in the republic, one must bore oneself all day long with paying serious court to the shopkeepers of the street, and become as stupid as themselves; and there, no opera!"

In the concluding sentence spoke the true genius, the mocking, penetrating, and Epicurean spirit of the man.

It is one of the common whims or tricks of Fame to reward the pioneers and champions of progress in an inverse ratio to their deserts. When their victory over error or prejudice is complete, the struggle is speedily forgotten, and their services, sometimes their very names, are forgotten too. The rising generation, who have been wont to regard the presence of Victor Hugo and Scribe among the illustrious Forty as a thing of course, and who have crowded to the Français to see Rachel in *Angelo* or *Adrienne Lecouvreur*, will find it difficult to believe that, less than forty years since, the arm-chairs of the Academy would have

been deemed desecrated by such occupants and the national theatre profaned by such performances. But the fact was so, and the complete change which public opinion in France has undergone on this class of subjects is owing in no slight degree to Beyle, who, in the first grand assault on classicism, led the forlorn hope.

Mérimée awards him the honour of having, so to speak, discovered Italian music for the Parisian amateurs. Saint Beuve, another high authority, says that Beyle, after having smoothed the way for the due appreciation of Cimarosa, Mozart, and Rossini by the French, was equally successful in clearing the horizon for the brilliant galaxy of writers who, during the last quarter of a century, have formed the pride and ornament of literature in France. When he came to the rescue, the Romanticists were outnumbered and hard-pressed. Whoever dared to transgress the unities of time and place, or to depart in the slightest degree from the prescriptive standards of orthodoxy in language, morals, manners, or dramatic action, was hooted down or proscribed; whilst the Academicians, forming a compact body of literary policemen, and backed by the most influential journals, stood prepared to enforce or execute the decree. Their ground was every way untenable, and they were soon thrown into confusion by the logic, sarcasms, and well-applied anecdotes of Beyle. At this distance of time from the controversy, a bare statement of the question will be enough.

"Romanticism," says Beyle, "is the art of presenting a people with the literary works which, in the actual condition of their habits and modes of faith, are capable of affording them the greatest possible amount of pleasure. Classicism, on the contrary, presents them with the literature which afforded the very greatest possible amount of pleasure to their great-grandfathers."

The "Correspondance Inédite," on which we have

already drawn largely for our biographical sketch, contains numerous specimens of criticism, observation, and description which go far towards justifying the estimate of the writer's intimate friends when they pronounce him to be better than his books. Unluckily, most of his letters, like his controversial writings, relate to bygone topics, or to publications which have fallen into oblivion or quietly settled down into their proper places, and either way have ceased to inspire interest enough to give zest to a commentary.

Beyle's "History of Painting in Italy," which he transcribed seventeen times, fell still-born. His essay "De L'Amour," as we are candidly informed in the preface to the new edition, shared the same fate. He told Madame Ancelot that the publisher, after waiting five years without selling a copy, sold the entire impression for ballast. Yet, despite his paradoxes and caprices, he must have been a very entertaining and instructive cicerone; and, too frequently imbedded in masses of broken thought and incomplete theory, more than one specimen of his happiest manner will be found in this neglected volume upon Love. Take, for example, the introductory part of the story, entitled "Le Rameau de Salzbourg."

"At the mines of Hallein, near Salzbourg, the miners throw into the pits that have been abandoned a bough stripped of its leaves: two or three months afterwards they find it entirely covered with brilliant crystallisations. The smallest branches, those which are not larger than the claw of a titmouse, are incrusted with an infinity of little glancing and glittering crystals. The primitive bough is no longer to be recognised. The miners never fail, when the sun is bright and the air perfectly dry, to offer these branches of diamonds to the travellers who are about to descend into the mine."

We omit the description of the party with whom the author visited these mines. All that it is neces-

sary to know is, that one of his companions was a beautiful Italian.

"During our preparations for the descent, which were long, I amused myself with observing what was passing in the head of a good-looking fair-complexioned Bavarian officer of hussars, who, although very handsome, had nothing of the coxcomb about him, and on the contrary appeared to be an *homme d'esprit;* it was Madame Gherardi (familiarly called the Ghita) who made the discovery. I saw him falling in love at first sight with the charming Italian, who was beside herself with pleasure at the thought of our soon finding ourselves five hundred feet under ground, and was a thousand miles from the thought of making conquests. Before long I was astonished at the strange confidences which the officer made to me unconsciously. I warned Madame Gherardi, who, but for me, would have lost this spectacle to which perhaps a young woman is never insensible. What struck me most was the shade of insanity which unceasingly increased in his reflections. He kept finding in this woman perfections more and more invisible to my eyes. Every moment what he said painted with less resemblance the woman he was beginning to love. I said to myself, the Ghita cannot be the cause of all the transports of this poor German. For example, he began praising her hand, which had been affected in a singular manner by the small-pox, and had remained very pitted and very brown.

"How to explain what I see? said I to myself. Where find a comparison to elucidate my thought? At this moment, Madame Gherardi was playing with the branch covered with crystals which the miners had just given her. There was a bright sunshine: it was the third of August, and the little saline prisms shone as brilliantly as the finest diamonds in a well-lighted ball-room. . . . I told the Ghita, 'The effect produced upon this young man by the nobleness of your Italian features, by those eyes such as he never saw before, is precisely similar to that which the crystallisation has produced on the little branch which you hold in your hand and think so pretty. Stripped of its leaves by the winter, it was surely nothing less than dazzling. The crystallisation of the salt has covered the blackened bough with these diamonds, so

brilliant and so numerous, that except in a few places we can no longer see the branches as they are.'

"'Well, and what is your conclusion?' said Madame Gherardi. 'That this bough,' I replied, 'faithfully represents the Ghita, such as she is seen in the imagination of this young officer.'

"'That is to say, that you perceive as much difference between what I am in reality and the manner in which this amiable young man regards me, as between a little branch of dried elm and the pretty *aigrette* of diamonds which these miners have presented to me!'

"'Madame, the young officer discovers in you qualities that we, your old friends, have never seen. For example, we should never perceive an air of tender and compassionate *bonté*. As this young man is a German, the first quality of a woman in his eyes is *bonté*, and forthwith he reads the expression of it in your face. If he was an Englishman, he would endow you with the aristocratic and "lady-like" air of a duchess; but if he were I, he would see you such as you are, because for many a day, and to my misfortune, I can imagine nothing more fascinating.'"

The thought may have occurred to others, as when Congreve's Mirabel says to Millamant,—"You are no longer handsome when you have lost your lover; your beauty dies upon the instant: for beauty is the lover's gift; 'tis he bestows your charms; your glass is all a cheat." But the theory was never so fully developed, or so gracefully expressed, and Beyle's carelessness, as well as his unreasonableness, in complaining of not being understood, may be estimated from the fact that this story, which is the key-note of the book, was discovered amongst his papers, and first appeared in the posthumous edition. He has an odd theory to account for the alleged insensibility of Englishwomen:—

"In England the wealthy classes, tired of staying at home, and under pretext of necessary exercise, complete their three or four leagues a day, as if man were created and placed on

the globe to trot. In this manner they consume the nervous fluid by the legs and not by the heart. After which, forsooth, they presume to talk of feminine delicacy, and to despise Spain and Italy. Nothing, on the contrary, can be more free from occupation than the young Italians; the motion which would deprive them of their sensibility is disagreeable to them. They may walk half a league occasionally as a painful security for health: as to the women, a Roman beauty does not take in a year as much exercise as a young *miss* in a week."

Beyle might have learnt that a young *miss* exercises her mind as well as her body; and it is a strange perversity of morals to claim the palm of "feminine delicacy" for women, who (if we may trust their eulogist) are trained to become languishing or capricious mistresses instead of faithful wives or intellectual companions, and taught that intrigue, not duty, is and ought to be the chief business and grand object of their lives. We shall conclude our extracts with an anecdote and a shrewd remark.

"Ought not the true pride of a woman to be placed in the energy of the sentiment she inspires? The courtiers of Francis the First were joking one of the queen-mother's maids of honour about the inconstancy of her lover, who, they said, had no real love for her. A short time afterwards this lover was taken ill, and reappeared at court dumb. One day, at the end of three years, when the same persons were expressing their astonishment at her loving him still, she said to him, 'Speak;' and he spoke.

"It not unfrequently happens that a clever man, in paying court to a woman, has done no more than make her think of love, and predispose her heart. She encourages this clever man, who gives her this pleasure. He conceives hopes. One fine day this woman meets the man who makes her feel what the other has described."

It is a redeeming feature in Beyle's character, to be set against a host of errors, that, in what he terms

his affairs of the heart, he was remarkable for the delicacy and depth of his feelings, and the constancy of his attachment. "There was one woman," says Mérimée, "whose name he could never pronounce without trepidation in his voice. In 1836 (he was then fifty-three) he spoke to me of his love with profound emotion. An affection, which dated very far back, was no longer returned. His mistress was growing reasonable, and he was as madly in love as at twenty. 'How can you still love me?' she asked; 'I am forty-five.' 'In my eyes,' said Beyle, 'she is as young as when we first met.' Then, with that spirit of observation which never left him, he detailed all the little symptoms of growing indifference that he had remarked. 'After all,' he said, 'her conduct is rational. She was fond of whist. She is fond of it no longer: so much the worse for me if I am still fond of whist. She is of a country where ridicule is the greatest of evils. To love at her age is ridiculous. During eighteen months she has risked this evil for my sake. This makes eighteen months of happiness that I have stolen from her.'"

Beyle, always too stout for elegance, grew corpulent as he advanced in years, and his portrait, as sketched by his friend M. Colomb, does not convey the impression of an *homme aux bonnes fortunes*. But his brow was fine, his eye lively and penetrating, his mouth expressive, and his hand cast in so fine a mould that a celebrated sculptor applied for permission to take a cast of it for a statue of Mirabeau.

The utmost space we feel justified in devoting to this remarkable man is exhausted, and we cannot now notice any other of his works. We will merely add one observation which is equally applicable to all of them. They belong pre-eminently to what he calls the class of insolent works, which require and compel

readers to think; and if (as many apprehend) the prevalent fashion for cheap reprints should end by deteriorating literature and lowering the popular taste, there will be some comfort in reflecting that it has occasionally rescued from unmerited neglect the name and writings of a man of thought, observation and sensibility, like Beyle.

PIERRE DUPONT.

(From the Morning Chronicle, May 1851.)

An imprudent and (it is to be hoped) abortive attempt has recently been made in France to frighten the higher classes and the *bourgeoisie* into a belief that the *Jacquerie* of the fourteenth century will be renewed, unless every manifestation of popular feeling is instantly suppressed by force. "Our only hope is in bayonets and grape-shot"—*l'artillerie contre l'imprimerie*," exclaims M. Romieu, the author of the "Spectre Rouge," in which every topic or argument that can excite alarm, or provoke recrimination, has been unsparingly employed. The ghost has been pretty effectually laid for some time to come by a temperate, well-reasoned, and high-toned article from the pen of M. Lamartine, in a recent number of "Le Pays." But if any of our readers have been led to suppose that the French peasantry have retrograded in civilisation, or are at all likely to repeat in 1852 the atrocities of 1358, we recommend them to procure, and study attentively, a little volume entitled "Muse Populaire—Pierre Dupont—Chants et Poësies." These "Chants et Poësies" are now selling by hundreds of thousands amongst the French workpeople, particularly in the rural districts.

Dupont's popularity with the lower order of his countrymen undoubtedly exceeds that of Béranger in the full height and freshness of his fame. Why is this? Is the younger poet rougher, coarser, less refined? Does he address himself more directly to their passions and prejudices? Does he deal more in local and ephemeral feelings and associations? Is he

more essentially or conventionally French? Does he flatter their national vanity more adroitly? The reverse of all this is the fact. Dupont (though inferior in wit) deals more in general nature than his distinguished predecessor in the same line. His politics are merged and forgotten in his poetry. There is not a shade of bitterness in his bursts of patriotic indignation; and we think no more of what are termed his socialist tendencies, when reading or listening to his songs, than we think of the "Whiteboyism" and "Captain Rockism" which pervade so many of the most popular of Moore's Irish melodies. Moreover, it should always be kept in mind that "Socialism" has gradually become a generic term for all shades of democratic opinion. It has no necessary connection with Communism, nor is it irreconcilable with the most unflinching attachment to social order and the principle of property. The whole of Dupont's Socialism consists in conceiving a popular Republic best suited to France, and in a conviction that a well-constituted Government might effectually intervene at all times for the relief of distressed branches of industry. He is a believer in the "remunerative-price" doctrine, and in the possibility of ensuring to every man "a fair day's pay for a fair day's work." In other words, he is merely Socialist in the sense in which our English Protectionists may be so described; the chief difference being that *he* would legislate with the view of elevating the condition of the poor, whilst *they* are prepared to reverse every sound principle of commerce and finance to swell the incomes of the landed aristocracy. So much for the rising poet's politics. Let us now turn to the far more important and interesting chapter of his life.

Pierre Dupont was born at Lyons, on the 23rd of April, 1821. His father was a *forgeron*, for which "blacksmith" is the nearest, although incorrect,

translation. His mother, an Italian by race, died when he was only four years and a half old; and his early training was undertaken by his uncle, a priest, with whom he remained until he had attained his ninth year. He was then removed to a *collége* or school of some note in the neighbourhood, the same in which many eminent living members of the Gallic Church, and at least one politician of note (Jules Favre), received their elementary education. At fourteen he was taken from school, and placed as clerk in a banking-house at Lyons, where he continued seven years. This was the critical and (so to speak) forming period of his career. His passion for rural life—for woods, streams, meadows, and flowers — was rather stimulated than repressed by his compelled residence in a town; and two events occurred during his clerkship which each in its peculiar way contributed to call out his latent powers and susceptibilities. He fell in love, and he became an unremitting student of Balzac. The object of his passion was of a rank far superior to his own, and may probably be detected under the disguise of "Eusèbe," in the song so entitled: —

"A sa fenêtre il l'a surprise
Se regardant à son miroir;
Il erre, du parc à l'église,
Dans les taillis pour l'entrevoir:
Elle est grande, leste et mignonne;
De la chevelure au soulier,
On voit qu'elle est une baronne,
Et lui n'est rien qu'un écolier."

She so far smiled upon him as to receive some occasional verses — from which (it is whispered) she inferred his future fame — and to permit latterly the daily presentation of a bouquet, which he purchased with his scanty savings when he was not able to go into the woods to pluck wild flowers for her. In an autograph note of his life which now lies before us,

the words *pur et platonique* indicate the nature of this his first love; to which we can hardly err in attributing the exquisitely refined character of all his amatory songs, which (unlike Béranger's, or even Moore's) do not contain a single allusion offensive to the nicest delicacy. The constant perusal of Balzac, also, must have aided largely in teaching him the (for a poet of sentiment) indispensable anatomy of the heart.

He came to Paris in 1842, with vague and half-formed hopes of winning fame and fortune by his pen. An incident which bade fair to crush his expectations at starting, became strangely and unexpectedly the means of realising them. He was drawn a conscript, and compelled to join a regiment of Chasseurs at Huninguen, where he remained three months without doing any kind of duty, or even wearing the uniform—the officers, it appears, having had quicker eyes for genius, or a juster appreciation of its claims, than those of the regiment in which Coleridge enlisted as a common soldier, in his youth. Prior to Dupont's departure for Huninguen, he had finished his first work, entitled "Les Deux Anges," now out of print. This is a collection of poetical impressions rather than a regular poem, and bears about the same relation to the "Muse Populaire" which the "Hours of Idleness" bears to "Childe Harold" or "Don Juan." The true string yet remained to be touched; or Dupont partially resembled the object of his earliest admiration, Balzac, who published (under the name of Horace Raison) more than thirty volumes of novels without attracting public favour. But the promise of future excellence in "Les Deux Anges" did not escape one excellent judge of literary merit. M. Lebrun (the author of "Marie Stuart") was struck by the work, and prevailed upon his brother academicians to subscribe to it. The proceeds proved sufficient to pay a *remplaçant*, and Dupont returned to Paris a free man.

The Academy prize in 1842 was decreed to him, and he was temporarily provided for by a place in the Dictionary Department of the Academy, where his duty was to trace the history and perfect the definitions of words. His reading was already very extensive, and he now materially enlarged its range. He read the best Roman Classics in the original, and the Greek, Italian, German, and English masterpieces in translation. Shakespeare and Goethe were his favourites, and ample proofs of his familiarity with their beauties might be collected from his compositions. But it was not by classical taste or acquired knowledge that he was destined to become famous. His most cherished associations were rural — his more ardent ambition was to be the exponent of the thoughts, feelings, wants, and wishes of the peasantry. In this mood of mind he composed his song, "Les Bœufs," and its success was instantaneous, indeed far greater than an English reader or critic can satisfactorily explain on any ordinary hypothesis. It merely embodies the enthusiastic attachment of the peasant proprietor or small farmer to the two dumb companions of his toil —his *deux grands bœufs blancs marqués de roux.* We give the concluding verse, with the *refrain:* —

"Quand notre fille sera grande,
Si le fils de notre régent
En mariage la demande,
Je lui promets tout mon argent;
Mais si pour dot il veut qu'on donne
Les grands bœufs blancs marqués de roux;
Ma fille, laissons la couronne
Et ramenons les bœufs chez nous.

S'il me fallait les vendre,
J'aimerais mieux me pendre;
J'aime Jeanne ma femme, eh bien! j'aimerais mieux
La voir mourir, que voir mourir mes bœufs."

"Les Bœufs" was followed in rapid succession by five or six other songs, similarly devoted to rural objects, but in a higher style. Amongst the earliest was "Les

Ouvriers," for which a Paris publisher (Furne) gave 5000f. (200*l.*); a conclusive proof of almost unprecedented popularity. It was published in 1846 and without (as we have heard him state repeatedly) the slightest reference to political objects. It contains a touching and startling picture of the miseries of the working class in many districts of France. But it is purely descriptive and sympathetic. It contains no incentive to insurrection; and the privilege of revelling in the enjoyment of natural beauty is the temptation to change which it sets before the wretched: —

"Mal vêtus, logés dans des trous,
Sous les combles, dans les décombres,
Nous vivons avec les hiboux
Et les larrons amis des ombres;
Cependant notre sang vermeil
Coule impétueux dans nos veines;
Nous nous plairons au grand soleil,
Et sous les rameaux verts des chênes."

An intelligent and accomplished, although rather harsh critic, M. Sainte-Beuve, after blaming the democratic tone of one or two of the songs, thus bears ample testimony to their general tone and influence: — "The distinctive feature of the 'Muse Populaire' is that it is, above all, pacific, consolatory, affectionate — that the song of each craft (*métier*) expresses its joy, even its pride and soft satisfaction — that it accompanies and lightens its labours — that it makes its moments happier and renders them more gay and light. How happens it, says Horace, that no one is content with his own lot, and is always envying his neighbours? The effect of the song of each *métier* ought to be, on the contrary, to make each feel, whilst he is singing it, an internal pride in his pursuit — to make him decidedly prefer it to other callings, always without contempt, without insult, and without bitterness." To show that this effect has been produced by Dupont, we have only to refer

to such songs as "Le Tisserand," or "La Chanson de la Soie." The last affords a striking example of felicitous transition from melancholy to gladness — from despondency to hope. The supposed scene is a silk manufactory: —

"Dans ce labyrinthe des fées,
L'esprit émerveillé se perd.
Mais combien d'âmes étouffées
Dans ce travail, comme le ver!
J'entendais une jeune fille
Dire en pleurant sur son fuseau:
'Je suis comme l'humble chenille,
'Et je file aussi mon tombeau.'

"A vos fuseaux, chantez fileuses,
Chante canut à ton métier,
Car vos heures laborieuses
Fleuriront comme l'églantier.
Voilà votre tour qui s'avance:
Voyez le bal étincelant
Où chaque épousée entre en danse,
En beaux habits de satin blanc.

"Filez moulins, glissez navettes,
Tissez le satin, le velours;
Faites des robes de toilettes,
Faites des nids à nos amours."

The *refrain* of "Le Tisserand" is —

"Des deux pieds battant mon métier,
Je tisse, et ma navette passe,
Elle siffle, passe et repasse,
Et je crois entendre crier
Une hirondelle dans l'espace."

Here again we see the indestructible love of nature peeping out. He is not unfrequently raised by it to more than beauty, to sublimity. Wordsworth himself was hardly more richly gifted in this respect, and some of the poet of Rydal Mount's finest sonnets would not gain by being placed alongside of some lines of "Les Sapins:" —

"Ses blancs piliers, un souffle les balance
Sans plus d'effort que les simples roseaux:

Chœur végétal, symphonie, orgue immense
Qui darde au ciel d'innombrables tuyaux.

Dieu d'harmonie et de beauté!
Par qui le sapin fut planté.
Par qui la bruyère est bénie,
J'adore ton génie
Dans sa simplicité."

Such verses as the following on the "Véronique" are Wordsworthian in the best sense of the term: —

"Fleurs touchantes du sacrifice,
Mortes, vous savez nous guérir.
Je vois dans votre humble calice
Le ciel entier s'épanouir.
O véroniques, sous les chênes
Fleurissez pour les simples cœurs
Qui dans les traverses humaines,
Vont cherchant les petites fleurs.

"Douces à voir, ô véroniques,
Vous ne durez qu'une heure ou deux,
Fugitives et sympathiques
Comme des regards amoureux."

The amatory and sentimental songs err on a side which will hardly be anticipated. They are too dreamy, too ideal, too "Platonic and pure." To most of them might be applied what female critics of no mean authority say of his features — that they are attractive, regular, expressive of every good and generous feeling, but wanting in that look or air which seems to whisper that *l'amour a passé par là*. This is true, as these ladies probably understand *amour* — merely as a wearing, wasting, agitating, unwholesome, and illicit luxury — for Dupont has been married for some years to a woman in his own original rank of life, and is devotedly attached to her.

"La Châtaine," however, affords ample evidence that he has been made acquainted, perhaps to his cost, with that most fascinating creation of artificial and over-refined life, a Parisian coquette: —

"Est-il une taille mieux prise,
Un pied fluet plus doux à voir,

Une forme plus indécise
Sous les dentelles du peignoir ?
Qu'un amoureux transi soupire
Et s'égare en vœux imprudents,
Son musical éclat de rire
Dans leur écrin montre ses dents."

" Elle est changeante, ma châtaine,
Comme les reflets du lézard,
Et le charme de son regard
Est un filet qui vous enchaîne."

We should hear speeches spoken, and songs sung, to arrive at a just and complete estimate of them. It can never be fair to either orator or *chansonnier* to judge him coldly and calmly in the closet. The effect of Dupont's singing is electrical. It is musical and impassioned recitation rather than ordinary singing; it is something between Moore and Mrs. Arkwright. He commonly sings at table, without instrumental accompaniment, and every word is distinctly articulated. His voice is rather husky or hoarse, till he warms; but when he sees from the kindling glances of his audience that he is carrying them along with him, it becomes full, clear, flexible, and sonorous, and lends itself harmoniously to every variety of fancy, sentiment, or thought. The rank of his company makes not the smallest difference in his demeanour, nor in his willingness to pour himself out in verse and music. He talks with the same ease and *abandon* with which he sings. The notion of being *lionised* has apparently never crossed his mind. He fortunately feels that the giddy circles of the *beau monde*, with their alluring refinement and frivolity, are no safe abiding-place for creative genius, which requires to be nursed, matured, and occasionally re-invigorated by solitude. His imagination deserts him in the town; and he invariably betakes himself to the forest, when he meditates a new production.

The best likeness of Dupont is a sketch in chalks by

Gigoux, an historical painter of merit. The artist has consciously or unconsciously supplied the very expression which the ladies declare to be wanting in the living poet. But is not this a mistake? or is it well to sanction the popular (and essentially feminine) error, that genius, like the liver of the Strasbourg goose, can only be brought to its highest perfection by disease and suffering? or that every buoyant, joyous, and elastic temperament must be alien and averse from poetry?

LORD ELDON,

AND THE CHANCES OF THE BAR.

(From the Edinburgh Review, July 1844.)

The Public and Private Life of Lord Chancellor Eldon: with Selections from his Correspondence. By Horace Twiss, Esq., one of Her Majesty's Counsel. 3 vols. 8vo. London: 1844.

This is not only a valuable but a very agreeable book; much more so than we thought a Life of Lord Eldon, in three thick octavos, could be made. The announcement, we own, rather appalled than gladdened us. We saw, in our mind's eye, Mr. Twiss's copying-clerk unceasingly at work. We anticipated whole chapters of debates on Catholic Emancipation, Chancery Reform, Reform in Parliament, and other great public questions; and we internally vowed that no human consideration should induce us to recommence a series of exhausted controversies. We have been pleasantly disappointed. Mr. Twiss is evidently as tired of such matters as ourselves. He has given us just so much of them as are necessary to prevent chasms in the narrative; but the staple of the work consists of letters (many from royal personages) supplied by the family; the curious biographical details which have appeared in the "Law Magazine[1];" a manuscript book of anecdotes and observations dotted down by Lord Eldon himself for his grandson, (new "Tales of a Grandfather;") and notes of conversations with the old Lord shortly

(1) Reprinted in Townshend's "Lives of Twelve Eminent Judges."

before his death, made by Mr. Farrer and two members of the family. No biographer could possess richer materials, and few biographers would have made so good a use of them. Some of the old stories might have been omitted, and some of the letters thrown into an appendix; but without being hypercritical, it would be difficult to suggest any fresh distribution of parts, any cuttings-out or fillings-up, by which the publication would be essentially improved; and it is generally allowed that those passages where Mr. Twiss comes forward in his own person, such as his political portraits, are judiciously interspersed and extremely well written.

Of course the book is a partial book. What life or memoir of a public man is not? Of course Mr. Twiss, a Tory though a Canningite, is occasionally unjust to Whigs; for even the truth-loving Dr. Johnson, when he wrote the debates of the House of Commons, always took care, he says, that the Whig dogs should have the worst of it. But it is beside our present purpose to undertake an examination of the work under its political aspects. Neither is it our intention to compose a fresh abstract or abridgement of the narrative, though this is both the easiest and pleasantest way of dealing with volumes of biography. It is one, however, which can only be employed effectively by first-comers; and owing to the pressure of other subjects and engagements, we happen to be among the last. Indeed, little or nothing seems left for us but to point the moral and adorn the tale; and our more peculiar object in this article will be, to compare Lord Eldon's career with that of other great lawyers; to form a precise estimate of his talents and opportunities; to ascertain what he owed to merit and what to fortune; and pronounce where his example should be followed, as well as when (for this will sometimes happen) it should be shunned.

In analysing the causes of his rise, we shall necessarily be led to take a view of the general qualifications for success at the bar, and the difficulties which beset the aspirant to forensic honours. But we do not think this will prove the most uninteresting or unacceptable part of this article. There is hardly a family among the educated classes that has not a relative, connection, or intimate acquaintance, embarked in the struggle: all these will be glad to learn what expectations they are justified in forming, and how they may best advance the fortunes of their favourites; while some will not be sorry to repair an involuntary injustice when they find, that, in this as well as in every other walk of life, it is one thing to merit, and another to command, prosperity.

We are the more anxious to take this opportunity for explaining the true nature of the forensic career, with the circumstances that influence it, because no subject is so little understood. One popular fallacy meets us at the very threshold. Lord Eldon, the son of a wealthy trader, is said to have done wonders in overcoming the disadvantages of birth; and no longer ago than the last session, Sir Robert Peel, in justifying the re-appointment of Lord Lyndhurst to the Great Seal, dwelt much less on his great experience, sagacity, and fine judicial understanding, than on his having risen by his own exertions from (what the Premier was pleased to term) comparative obscurity to the highest civic station next the throne. When such notions are sanctioned by such authority, it is time to probe them to the root.

A little book was published recently, entitled "The Grandeur of the Law," by Mr. Foss, from which it appears that more than seventy British peerages have been founded by successful lawyers, the dukedoms of Norfolk and Devonshire being of the number. Sir William Howard, a judge in the reigns of Edward

the First and Edward the Second, was the founder of the Howard family; Sir John de Cavendish, Lord Chief-Justice in the reigns of Edward the Third and Richard the Second, of the Cavendishes. But the church in those days was the only profession which afforded the lowly-born a chance; judgeships were conferred by the Plantagenets without much regard to judicial qualities; and it will be found, upon nice inquiry, that the majority of those who rose to eminence, through the law, prior to the seventeenth century, were men of good family, or connected with the great. There is an ordinance, signed by Bacon, closing the Inns of Court against all but gentlemen entitled to coat armour. Indeed, it was not until the beginning of the eighteenth that the lists were thrown open to all comers, and the prizes fairly distributed; but, dating from that period, the self-dependent competitors have had their full share of them.

Lord Somers' father was an attorney at Worcester; Lord Hardwicke's, an attorney at Dover; Lord King's, a grocer at Exeter; the late Lord Gifford's (by an odd coincidence), a grocer in the same city; Lord Thurlow's, a poor country clergyman *; Lord Kenyon's, a gentleman of small estate in Wales; Dunning's, an attorney at Ashburton; Sir Vicary Gibbs', a surgeon and apothecary at Exeter †; Sir Samuel Romilly's, a jeweller, though of a good refugee family; Sir Samuel Shepherd's (as we learn from a memoir by his son), a goldsmith; Lord Tenterden's, a barber at Canterbury, described as "a little, erect, primitive-

* When Thurlow was Chancellor, some one, wishing to flatter him, suggested that he was descended from Thurlow, the Secretary of Cromwell. "No, sir," was the gruff reply; "there were two Thurlows in our county in those days, Thurlow the secretary and Thurlow the carrier. I am descended from the carrier."

† The air of this city seems congenial to forensic talents. Sir William Follett was born in the immediate neighbourhood.

looking man, with a large club pig-tail, going about with the instruments of his business under one arm, and attended by his son Charles (the future Chief-Justice), a youth as decent, grave, and primitive-looking, as himself." Lord Mansfield and Lord Erskine were men of family; but all Lord Mansfield got by his noble connections were a few briefs in Scotch appeal cases; and Erskine, just about the time when he was called to the bar, was heard emphatically thanking God, that, out of his own family, he did not know a lord. It would have been more to the purpose to thank God that he *did* know an attorney; but he judged rightly in supposing that his noble blood would be of no avail. The reason is stated by Sergeant (the late Mr. Justice) Talfourd in his "Essay on the Bar." After explaining the composition of the class with whom the distribution of business rests, and the absolute necessity for those rules of etiquette which strangers are apt to ridicule, he continues:—

"But no rule of etiquette, however strict, and no feelings of delicacy, however nice and generous, can prevent a man, who has connections among attorneys, from possessing a great advantage over his equals who have none. It is natural that his friends should think highly of him, and desire to assist him; and it would be absurd to expect that he should disappoint them by refusing their briefs, when conscious of ability to do them justice. Hence a youth, born and educated in the middle ranks of life, who is able to struggle to the bar, has often a far better chance of speedy success than a gentleman of rank and family. This consideration may lessen the wonder, so often expressed, at the number of men who have arisen to eminence in the law from comparatively humble stations. Without industry and talent, they would have done little; but, perhaps, with both these they might have done less, if their early fame had not been nurtured by those to whom their success was a favourite object, and whose zeal afforded them at once opportunity and stimulus, which to more elevated adventurers are wanting."

Lord Eldon's father was a general trader at Newcastle. His principal employment was that of a coal-fitter or coal-factor (the person who conducts the sales between the owner and shipper;) but, according to a memorandum kept by the son, his dealings were not limited to one commodity:—

"Malt; coals; ships; underwriting ships; grindstones for foreign countries; coal forges on the Tyne, 12, 13, 14, or 16, two men each, all the year; sole owner of a sugar-house in Newcastle; owner of various houses and large gardens; bought two estates in the county of Durham. Lord Stowell never would sell them after his father's death, because they were his father's. At his death, there were few persons in Newcastle town of substance equal."

When we add that the property left to Lord Stowell alone amounted to 25,000*l.*, the supposed marvel is at an end. Lord Eldon had as fair a start in point of birth and connexion as nineteen out of twenty of his contemporaries. So (with due deference to Sir Robert Peel) had the present Lord Chancellor (Lyndhurst). We do not say this to detract from their merits, but to fix the precise value of the examples they hold up.

The Scotts received their school education at the grammar-school of Newcastle. Lord Collingwood was Lord Eldon's class-fellow. "We were placed at that school," said Lord Eldon, "because neither his father nor mine could afford to place us elsewhere." They lay under no disadvantage on that account, and Lord Eldon felt that they did not. He is always eager to do justice to the merits of his old master, the Rev. Mr. Moises, and tells, with evident satisfaction, the anecdote of the king (George III.) expressing his surprise how a naval officer could write so excellent a despatch as that which contained Collingwood's account of the battle of Trafalgar, and suddenly adding, "but I find he was educated by Moises."

The foundation of the two brothers' fortune was laid by William (Lord Stowell), who in his sixteenth year obtained a scholarship at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and followed up this first university success so effectually, that in 1766, when the father wrote to notify an intention of making his youngest son a fitter, he was enabled to reply—"Send Jack up to me; I can do better for him here." Jack was accordingly matriculated in 1766, being then fifteen, and the year following elected to a fellowship. As it is not recorded that any competition took place, he was probably the only member of the college duly qualified as to county. He took his bachelor's degree in February 1770. "An examination for a degree at Oxford," he used to say, "was a farce in my time. I was examined in Hebrew and in History." 'What is the Hebrew for the place of a skull?' I replied, 'Golgotha.' 'Who founded University College?" I stated (though, by the way the point is sometimes doubted) 'that King Alfred founded it.' 'Very well, sir,' said the examiner, 'you are competent for your degree.'"

We have consequently no means of ascertaining how far he became a proficient in the peculiar studies of the place; but, the year following, he won the Chancellor's prize for the best composition in English prose—the subject being, the "Advantages and Disadvantages of Foreign Travel." It would be unreasonable to expect any depth of thought on such a subject from an untravelled lad, and the essay is never wanting in good sense; but the style is turgid, and the clumsy construction of the sentences would lead us to infer that Mr. Moises had taken less pains with John Scott than with Collingwood, did we not bear in mind how intimately style is connected with character—*le style, c'est l'homme.* He who thinks decidedly, will write clearly, if not forcibly; he who

has made up his mind what he is going to say, can say it; and the difference between Lord Eldon's and Lord Collingwood's mode of writing, is neither more nor less than that which existed to the last between the energetic Seaman and the hesitating Judge. Lord Eldon's style did not improve materially in after life. It ceased to be turgid, but it never ceased to be confused and ungrammatical. He might have said of grammar what the *roué* Duc de Richelieu said of spelling—"We quarrelled at the outset of life, and never made up our differences."

Mr. Twiss, a man of taste, with probably the *Microcosm* in his recollection, hurries over the subject of the essay, pausing neither for extracts nor commendations, but contents himself with recording the delight with which it was received at Newcastle.

It is worthy of note that, five or six years later, the same prize was won by another great lawyer, Lord Tenterden, the subject being "The Use and Abuse of Satire." His essay is remarkable for neatness, correctness, and precision, the very qualities by which he was distinguished in the courts. A still more successful Oxford prize-man was Mr. Justice Coleridge, who won three prizes (including the prize in question) in one year. Cambridge, however, has always been the favourite University for embryo lawyers, from a notion that the mathematics are better adapted than classics to prepare the mind for forensic reasoning; and on running over the list of wranglers and medallists, we cease to wonder that this notion has gained ground. On that list we find, among many other less known names, those of Law (the first Lord Ellenborough), Copley, Tindal, Littledale, Shadwell, Bickersteth, Pollock, Parke, Alderson, Maule, &c. On the other hand, an equal or greater number of eminent judges and advocates never received the benefit of an Oxford or Cambridge educa-

tion, or made no effort at distinction there. Hardwicke, Kenyon, Thurlow, Dunning, Erskine, Scarlett, Gifford, Shepherd, Romilly, Follett, with almost all the undisputed leaders of the profession in England at the present moment, belong to one or the other of these two categories. It is, therefore, quite impossible to deduce any general rule from the examples; and those who lay much stress on college honours as an earnest of future eminence, as well as those who make light of them as an indication, are equally at fault.

Neither at school or college was Lord Eldon one of those demure boys who (as Falstaff says) never come to any proof. He was always fond of a frolic, and used to relate, with great glee, how he aided in cutting down a tree in All-Saints' churchyard, and how often he poached on Lord Abingdon's preserves. He had also no particular liking for work. "I have now (he said late in life) a letter in which Lord Thurlow promised me a commissionership of bankruptcy, when it would have been most valuable to me in point of income; he never gave it me, and he always said it was a favour to me to withhold it. What he meant was, that he had learnt (a clear truth) that I was by nature very indolent, and it was only want that could make me very industrious."

Some have carried the doctrine still further. "Spend your own fortune, marry, and spend your wife's, and then you will have some chance of succeeding in the law." Kenyon (to whom, as well as Thurlow, this advice has been attributed) and Dunning might be cited as practical examples of the stimulating effects of poverty. They used generally (according to Steevens) "to dine together, in vacation time, at a small eating-house near Chancery Lane, where their meal was supplied to them at the charge of sevenpence-halfpenny a-head." Horne

Tooke, who frequently made a third, added, in telling this to Steevens—"Dunning and myself were generous, for we gave the girl who waited on us a penny a-piece; but Kenyon, who always knew the value of money, rewarded her with a halfpenny, and sometimes with a promise." Erskine often spoke of his wife and children twitching at his gown, and constraining him to exertion. Still, one of the last professions we should recommend to a young man without fortune or connexion, is the law.

Assuming (what, in the present state of the profession, is far from clear) that industry and talent will eventually ensure success, considerable expenses must be incurred at the outset, and many years may elapse before a remunerating income can be calculated on. How is the future attorney-general or judge to keep himself during the intervening period without diverging from the course? The utmost that can be expected is, that he will not imitate the example of a late leader, who used fairly to admit that he had been guilty of sundry breaches of etiquette at starting; but excused himself by saying that he left off all improper practices the moment he could afford to do without them. The late Lord Abinger was so strongly impressed with the conviction, that independence in point of circumstances was requisite, as well to give the candidate a fair chance as to keep up the respectability of the calling, that at one time he had serious thoughts of proposing a property qualification for barristers. In his opinion, 400*l.* a-year was the smallest income on which a barrister should begin. He himself had been a gentleman commoner at Trinity College, Cambridge, and when he joined the Northern Circuit, was already in the possession of a handsome income; but this never lessened his interest in his profession, though it enabled him to follow it on liberal principles. Perhaps the most favourable posi-

tion for a young man of any force of character is, to be sure of a small independence, but to have fortune, position, and the luxuries of life to struggle for.

As for the self-accusation of indolence, it is not at all unusual to find an extraordinary capacity for mental labour combined with an extreme reluctance to undertake it. Dr. Johnson seldom put pen to paper except to get money when he wanted it. He complained that the setting his mind in motion was always attended with pain, though when it was thoroughly warmed and in full play, the excitement was pleasurable. Perhaps Lord Eldon felt the same; or, to take a more obvious solution, perhaps Lord Thurlow got up the charge as the best excuse for his own breach of promise; and Lord Eldon assented to it, without reflecting that all of us are by nature indolent, if this means that we are frequently disinclined to work.

Be this as it may, he took care to provide himself with the stimulant of necessity. In November 1772, being then twenty-one years and a few months old, he ran away with Miss Surtees, a beautiful girl of eighteen, and married her. Neither of them had a sixpence independent of their parents; and the marriage was equally displeasing to the friends and family of each. "Jack Scott has run off with Bessy Surtees," exclaimed Mr. Moises; "and the poor lad is undone!" He spoke the opinion of Newcastle. At Oxford, Lord Stowell observed to a friend — "I suppose you have heard of this very foolish act of my very foolish brother?" The friend expressed a hope that it might turn out better than was anticipated. "Never, sir; he is completely ruined; nor can any thing now save him from beggary." He was obliged to relinquish his fellowship; but a year of grace remained during which he had the option of accepting any college living that might come to his turn. During

this year he began the study of the law, with the view (to use his own words) of having two strings to his bow. But the church "was his first mistress;" and it was not until all chance of a college living was at an end, that he decided "to pursue a profession which had much less of his affection and respect."

It is a curious coincidence, that the two greatest Chancery lawyers of their day should both have been forced into the profession by incidental circumstances. Romilly says, that what principally influenced his decision was, the being thus enabled to leave his small fortune in his father's hands, instead of buying a sworn clerk's seat with it. "At a later period of my life, after a success at the bar which my wildest and most sanguine dreams had never painted to me — when I was gaining an income of 8000*l.* or 9000*l.* a-year — I have often reflected how all that prosperity had arisen out of the pecuniary difficulties and confined circumstances of my father."

Wedderburn (Lord Loughborough) began as an advocate at the Scotch Bar. In the course of an altercation with the Lord President, he was provoked to tell his Lordship that he had said as a judge what he could not justify as a gentleman. Being ordered to make an apology, he refused, and left the Scotch for the English bar. What every one thought his ruin, turned out the best thing that could happen to him.

> "There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough hew them how we may."

Lord Tenterden's early destination was changed by a disappointment. When he and Mr. Justice Richards were going the Home Circuit, they visited the cathedral at Canterbury together. Richards commended the voice of a singing man in the choir. "Ah," said Lord Tenderden, "that is the only man

I ever envied! When at school in this town, we were candidates for a chorister's place, and he obtained it."

It is now well known that the Duke of Wellington, when a subaltern, was anxious to retire from the army, and actually applied to Lord Camden (then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland) for a commissionership of customs! It is not always true, then, that men destined to play conspicuous parts in the world, have a consciousness of their coming greatness, or patience to "bide their time." Their hopes grow, as their capacity expands, with circumstances; honours on honours arise, like Alps on Alps; in ascending one they catch a glimpse of another, till the last and highest, which was veiled in mist when they started, stands out in bold relief against the sky. Lord Eldon certainly had none of those vague presentiments or proud aspirings which made Nelson, when a captain, exclaim that, some time or other, he would have a gazette to himself. He had little if any imagination; the poetry of his life began and ended with "Bessy." During many months after his success was considered certain by his friends, he meditated settling down as a provincial barrister in Newcastle; and a comfortable house in the High Street was his castle in air.

Immediately after the marriage, he writes thus to a friend: — "I have now, Reay, bid adieu to all ambitious projects, because my ambition is gratified. Though a husband, I am still so much of a lover as to think the world well lost while I retain the affections of one woman, the esteem of a few friends, and the good wishes of Reay." This was something more than a mere honeymoon sentiment. A love-match may be either a very silly and selfish action, or a very wise and disinterested one; — the suggestion of a passing fancy, or the result of reflection and

self-knowledge. Lord Eldon tells us, that he had literally no alternative but to act as he did, or live in the hourly apprehension of seeing the only woman who could make him happy forced into a union with another; and as he never repented of his choice, or shrank from the labour or repined at the privations it entailed upon him, it would be doing him a great injustice to regard his marriage as a mere youthful indiscretion, and the beneficial results as accidents.

The circumstances of the young couple were slender, but not embarrassed. Besides the interest of 3000*l.*, at five per cent. settled upon them, he had an allowance from his father, and occasional aid from other quarters. Still he had to depend upon his own exertions for everything beyond bare necessaries; and the consciousness of this drove him into the error, common to men of energetic character, of overtasking both his bodily and mental powers to a degree which nearly proved fatal to all his hopes and projects, and partially counteracted the very object he had in view. He became so alarmingly ill, that when he and a travelling companion stopped, late at night, at Birmingham, on their way from Newcastle, in 1774, the cook at the Hen and Chickens insisted on dressing something hot for them, saying she was sure they would neither of them live to see her again. A medical friend remonstrated. "It is no matter," was the answer; "I must either do as I am now doing, or starve." We do not see the necessity. A student will learn more in two or three years by judiciously husbanding his strength, than by exhausting it at starting. But this is a truth which no one will condescend to take at second hand; and the consequence is, that our seats of learning are strewed with the wrecks of broken constitutions. Lord Eldon had a narrow escape. The year after his call to the bar, he

was obliged to consult Dr. Heberden, who sent him to Bath, with an intimation that he must prepare for the worst, unless the waters brought on a fit of the gout within a month. The gout appeared within the allotted period, and he was saved.

It is stated by Mr. Townsend, and repeated by Mr. Twiss, that he was in the habit of rising at five in the morning, and studying at night with a wet towel round his head; not (like Porson) to allay fever, but to prevent drowsiness. No wonder that his spirits lost their elasticity. In 1775 he apologises for not writing to his brother Henry, because he foresaw "that a gloomy strain of melancholy would sully every page of the sheet."

Perhaps no two men,—certainly no two men above the common level, ever acquired their knowledge in the same order, or fixed it by the same method in the memory. One reads a book carefully through; another dips into it at random, reads enough to seize the leading idea, or (as Boswell says of Johnson) digs out the heart of it, and throws it by. One likes to begin with the simplest rules or elements, and clear away each difficulty as he goes on; another prefers plunging into a mass of heterogeneous matter, for the pleasure of seeing new lights constantly breaking upon him, and in the firm confidence of eventually emerging somewhere, and of being amply rewarded for his adventurous exertions in the end. Any mode of study may be good with relation to the individual, and none are fit for universal adoption. Still it is always curious, and sometimes useful, to know how men of Lord Eldon's *calibre* set to work.

We are not informed what law-book he read first; but he was clearly for strong meat. Lawyers brought up on Blackstone and "less elegant compilers," were (in his opinion) like dogs bred in the parlour, unfit for the rough service of the field; and we strongly

suspect that he took the bull by the horns, and grappled with Coke upon Littleton at once. Such a feat is not impossible, since Dr. Parr read through "Fearne's Contingent Remainders," as a mental exercise, and expressed himself much pleased with the closeness of the logic. Still, in reading Coke, (a much tougher job than Fearne,) the sage's own warning must have been kept in mind: "And albeit, the reader shall not at any one day, do what he can, reach to the meaning of our author, or of our commentaries; yet let him noway discourage himself, but proceed; for on some other day, in some other place, that doubt will be cleared." In 1807, Lord Eldon tells Mr. Farrer to read Coke upon Littleton again and again. "If it will be toil and labour to you, and it will be so, think as I do when I am climbing up to Swyer or to Westhill, (high grounds at Encombe,) that the world will be all before you when the toil is over: for so the law world will be, if you make yourself complete master of that book. I read Coke on Littleton through, when I was the other day out of office, and when I was a student I abridged it." In fact, his Coke, Coke, Coke, was like the *action, action, action* of Demosthenes. One day, when his brother asked him to meet Dr. Johnson at dinner, the answer was, "I dine with Coke to-day." The late Lord Abinger, a greater advocate, though a far inferior judge, drew up a list of books for a law student, at the head of which stands "*Cicero de Officiis*, once, twice, thrice, once every year;"—a curious contrast, and a striking illustration of the inevitable want of agreement on this subject.

Still scorning the aid of treatises, Lord Eldon appears to have next thrown himself with his whole remaining strength upon the Chancery Reports. Mr. Townsend says he acquired such an intimate acquaintance with most of them, that he could tell not

merely the very page in which each of the cases was to be found, but state off-hand the precise points in which they agreed or differed.

It is considered an essential part of legal education in England, for those who intend to practise in the common-law courts, to pass a year at least in the chambers of a special pleader, where the various written proceedings in a cause (the declaration or complaint, the plea, the replication, &c.) are prepared. A year in the chambers of an equity draftsman, to learn the mode of drawing bills and answers, is thought equally indispensable for Chancery barristers. But the prescriptive fee is one hundred guineas per annum; and Lord Eldon gallantly made up his mind to dispense with this description of noviciate altogether. "How then," asked Mr. Farrer, "did you acquire your knowledge of pleading?" "Why," answered Lord Eldon, "I copied everything I could lay my hands upon." He compiled two large volumes of precedents, but lent them to a friend, and could not recollect to whom. In allusion to such borrowers, he observed, that "though backward in *accounting*, they seemed to be practised in *book-keeping*."

He was so fortunate as to meet with a conveyancer, who, out of regard for his family and respect for his talents, offered to give him the run of his chambers without a fee. The gentleman in question was Mr. Duane, a Roman Catholic, who did all the great conveyancing of Newcastle and the neighbourhood. Lord Eldon was particularly anxious to be with him, in the hope of profiting by the connexion when he settled in the north, to which he was eagerly looking forward. He remained only six months in Mr. Duane's chambers, being unwilling to incur too great an extent of obligation.

"Every man," says Gibbon, "who rises above the common level, receives two educations—the first from

his instructors; the second, the most personal and important, from himself." Almost all Lord Eldon's legal education was from himself, without even the ordinary helps, which he disdainfully flung from him; and of no one could it be more truly predicated, that he was not "rocked and dandled" into a lawyer.

The time was now approaching when the efficacy of this peculiar mode of training was to be tried. He was called to the bar in February 1776. Mr. Bentham, in his "Indications of Lord Eldon," with somewhat less than his wonted scrupulosity, asserts, that "Mr. Scott waited the exact number of years it cost to take Troy, and had formed his determination to pine no longer, when Providence sent an angel in the shape of a Mr. Barker, with the papers of a fat suit and a retaining fee." Mr. Scott did not wait more than five years, and was in the full tide of prosperity before the tenth. The first year was not productive. It was agreed between him and his wife, that whatever he got during the first eleven months should be his, and whatever he got in the twelfth month should be hers. "What a stingy dog I must have been to have made such a bargain! I would not have done so afterwards. But, however, so it was: that was our agreement; and how do you think it turned out? In the twelfth month, I received half a guinea; eighteenpence went for fees, and Bessy got nine shillings: in the other eleven months I got not one shilling."

During the second year, the Duke of Northumberland, who had been quartered at Newcastle, and was acquainted with his father-in-law, caused him to be retained in a case before the House of Lords. "I consider the fee," said Scott, "only as a handsome way of giving me twenty guineas a-day for walking down to the House of Lords." He had also a general retainer for the corporation of Newcastle, and picked

up a brief or two on circuit. Still these were small gains, and, weakened as he was by sickness, he occasionally lost heart. "Business" (writes the elder brother, William, to the second, Henry) "is very dull with poor Jack — very dull indeed; and of consequence he is not very lively. I heartily wish that business may brisken a little, or he will be heartily sick of his profession. I do all I can to keep up his spirits, but he is very gloomy." A whim or fancy — for we cannot believe it to be more — induced him to change his line. Upon Mr. Farrer asking him, whether the Court of Chancery had been his object when he was called to the bar, he replied — "Certainly not. I first took my seat in the King's Bench; but I soon perceived, or thought I perceived, a preference in Lord Mansfield for young lawyers who had been bred at Westminster School and Christ Church; and as I had belonged to neither, I thought I should not have a fair chance, and therefore I crossed over to the other side of the Hall. Lord Mansfield, I do believe, was not conscious of the bias; he was a good man." Lord Eldon could have had no opportunity of testing this bias by his own individual experience; and we suspect it existed only in a mind rendered morbidly apprehensive by bodily suffering and disappointment. The change was fortunate; for many years might have elapsed before the stores of real property lore, which formed the bulk of his legal knowledge, could have been brought into play in the courts of common law. As things turned out, a speedy opportunity was afforded. Early in the third year occurred the case of Ackroyd v. Smithson, which laid the foundation of his fame.

"'Might I ask you, Lord Eldon,' said Mr. Farrer, 'whether Ackroyd v. Smithson was not the first cause in which you distinguished yourself?'

"'Did I ever tell you the history of that case? Come,

help yourself to a glass of Newcastle port, and give me a little. You must know,' he went on, 'that the testator in that cause had directed his real estates to be sold, and, after paying his debts and funeral and testamentary expenses, the residue of the money to be divided into fifteen parts, which he gave to fifteen persons whom he named in his will. One of these persons died in the testator's lifetime. A bill was filed by the next of kin, claiming, amongst other things, the lapsed share. A brief was given me to consent for the heir-at-law, upon the hearing of the cause. I had nothing then to do, but to pore over this brief. I went through all the cases in the books, and satisfied myself that the lapsed share was to be considered as real estate, and belonged to my client (the heir-at-law). The cause came on at the Rolls, before Sir Thomas Sewell. I told the solicitor who sent me the brief, that I should consent for the heir-at-law so far as regarded the due execution of the will, but that I must support the title of the heir to the one-fifteenth which had lapsed. Accordingly, I did argue it, and went through all the authorities. When Sir Thomas Sewell went out of court, he asked the register who that young man was? The register told him it was Mr. Scott. "He has argued very well," said Sir Thomas Sewell, "but I cannot agree with him." This the register told me. He decided against my client.

"'You see the lucky thing was, there being two other parties, and the disappointed one not being content, there was an appeal to Lord Thurlow. In the meanwhile, they had written to Mr. Johnstone, recorder of York, guardian to the young heir-at-law, and a clever man, but his answer was — "Do not send good money after bad; let Mr. Scott have a guinea to give consent, and if he will argue, why, let him do so, but give him no more." So I went into court, and when Lord Thurlow asked who was to appear for the heir-at-law, I rose and said modestly, that I was; and as I could not but think (with much deference to the Master of the Rolls, for I might be wrong) that my client had the right to the property, if his lordship would give me leave I would argue it. It was rather arduous for me to rise against all the eminent counsel. Well, Thurlow took three days to consider, and then delivered his judgment in accordance with my speech; and that speech is in print, and has decided all similar questions ever since.'"

As he left the hall, a respectable solicitor, named Foster, came up to him, touched him on the shoulder, and said, "Young man, your bread and butter is cut for life." He did not think so, or languished for his native town; for when, precisely one year afterwards, the recordership of Newcastle was offered to him, he accepted it, and caused a house to be taken for him there. Then occurred one of these anomalous incidents which can only be referred to luck:—

"'I did not go to the circuit one year, Mary,' said Lord Eldon to Mrs. Foster, 'because I could not afford it; I had borrowed of my brother for several circuits without getting adequate remuneration, and I had determined to quit London, because I could not afford to stay in it. You know a house was taken for me at Newcastle. Well! one morning about six o'clock,' (probably on the 14th of March, 1781, the committee having been struck on the 13th), 'Mr. (afterwards Lord) Curzon, and four or five gentlemen, came to my door and woke me; and when I enquired what they wanted, they stated that the Clitheroe election case was to come on that morning at ten o'clock, before a committee of the House of Commons; that Mr. Cooper had written to say he was detained at Oxford by illness, and could not arrive to lead the cause; and that Mr. Hardinge, the next counsel, refused to do so, because he was not prepared. "Well, gentlemen," said I, "what do you expect me to do, that you are here?" They answered, "they did not know what to expect or to do, for the cause must come on at ten o'clock, and they were totally unprepared, and had been recommended to me as a young and promising counsel." I answered — "I will tell you what I can do; I can undertake to make a dry statement of facts, if that will content you, gentlemen; but more I cannot do, for I have no time to make myself acquainted with the law." They said that must do; so I begged they would go down stairs, and let me get up as fast as I could. Well, I did state the facts, and the cause went on for fifteen days. It found me poor enough, but I began to be rich before it was done; they left me fifty guineas at the beginning, then there were ten guineas every day, and five guineas every evening for a consultation — more money than I could

count. But, better still, the length of the cause gave me time to make myself thoroughly acquainted with the law.'"

According to a scheme for adapting the division of labour to the stage, described by the late Charles Matthews, one actor was to do the action and another to speak the speeches. Hardly less absurd is the practice of one counsel attending to the evidence, and another hurrying in at the end to reply. Yet it existed in Lord Eldon's time as it exists still. At the end of a fifteen days' enquiry, Mr. Hardinge presented himself.

"'I saw the members of the committee put their heads together, and then one of them said, "Mr. Hardinge, Mr. Scott opened the case, and has attended it throughout, and the committee think, that, if he likes to reply, he ought to do so. Mr. Scott, would you like to reply?" I answered, "that I would do my best." I began my speech with a very bad joke. You must know that the leading counsel on the other side, Douglas, afterwards Lord Glenbervie, had made one of the longest speeches ever known before a committee, and had argued that the borough of Clitheroe was not a borough by prescription, for it had its origin within the memory of man. I began by saying, "I will prove to the committee, by the best evidence, that the borough of Clitheroe is a borough by prescription; and that it had its origin before the memory of man. My learned friend will admit the commencement of this borough was before the commencement of his speech; but the commencement of his speech is beyond the memory of man; therefore, the borough of Clitheroe must have commenced before the memory of man." We were beaten in the committee by one vote. After this speech, Mansfield, afterwards Sir James Mansfield, came up to me in Westminster Hall, and said he heard I was going to leave London, but strongly advised me to remain. I told him that I could not; that I had taken a house in Newcastle; that I had an increasing family; in short, that I was compelled to quit London. Wilson afterwards came to me, and pressed me in the same manner to remain in London, adding, what was very kind, that he would ensure me 400*l.* the next year. I gave

him the same answer as I had given Mansfield. However, I did remain in London, and lived to make Mansfield Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas, and Wilson a Puisne Judge.'"

Until very recently, it was customary for Chancery barristers to go circuit and attend sessions—in short, to beat up for practice in all quarters. Lord Eldon does not appear to have attended any sessions; but, except during one year, when funds were wanting, he regularly went the Northern Circuit, and, at two assize towns in succession was brought forward by the opportune absence of a leader, and a joke. Case the first is thus related by Mr. Twiss:—

"The plaintiff was a Mrs. Fermor, who sought damages against the defendant, an elderly maiden lady, named Sanstern, for an assault committed at a whist-table. Mr. Scott was junior counsel for the plaintiff, and when the cause was called on, his leader was absent in the Crown court, conducting a government prosecution. Mr. Scott requested that the cause might be postponed till his leader should be at liberty; but the judge refusing, there was no help, and Mr. Scott addressed the jury for Mrs. Fermor, and called his witnesses. It was proved that at the whist-table some angry words arose between the ladies, which at length kindled to such heat, that Miss Sanstern was impelled to throw her cards at the head of Mrs. Fermor, who (probably in dodging to avoid these missiles) fell or slipped from her chair to the ground. Upon this evidence, the defendant's counsel objected that the case had not been proved as alleged; for that the declaration stated the defendant to have committed the assault with her hand, whereas the evidence proved it to have been committed with the cards. Mr. Scott, however, contended, that the facts were substantially proved according to the averment in the declaration, of an assault committed with the hand—for that, in the common parlance of the card-table, the hand means the hand of cards; and thus that Miss Sanstern, having thrown her cards into Mrs. Fermor's face, had clearly assaulted Mrs. Fermor with her hand. The court laughed—the jury, much diverted, found the plaintiff's allegations sufficiently proved—and the young counsel had the frolic and fame of a verdict in his favour."

He told Mr. Spence, the queen's counsel, that he was first brought into notice on the Northern Circuit by breaking the Ten Commandments:—

"'I'll tell you how it was. I was counsel in a cause, the fate of which depended on our being able to make out who was the founder of an ancient chapel in the neighbourhood. I went to view it. There was nothing to be observed which gave any indication of its date or history. However, I observed that the Ten Commandments were written on some old plaster, which, from its position, I conjectured might cover an arch. Acting on this, I bribed the clerk with five shillings to allow me to chip away part of the plaster; and after two or three attempts, I found the keystone of an arch, on which were engraved the arms of an ancestor of one of the parties. This evidence decided the cause, and I ever afterwards had reason to remember, with some satisfaction, my having on that occasion broken the Ten Commandments.'"

His first success at Durham was in *Adair* v. *Swinburne*, involving a question of great importance to coal-owners. All the leaders of the circuit were retained; but it was arranged in consultation that Scott should lead the cause, partly because he had been employed in some preliminary proceedings — partly because he had been bred in a coal country— and partly (we cannot help suspecting) because they were apprehensive of the result. When the defendant's case closed, the judge expressed a decided opinion against Scott's client.

"'Said Mr. Justice Buller, "You have not a leg to stand upon." Now this was very awkward—a young man—and the Judge speaking so decidedly. However, I said, "My lord, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred I would sit down upon hearing the Judge so express himself; but so persuaded am I that I have the right on my side, that I must entreat your lordship to allow me to reply; and I must also express my expectation of gaining a verdict." Well, I did reply; and the jury—it was a special jury—Charles Brandling was foreman—retired, and after consulting six or eight hours,

they returned, and actually gave the verdict in my favour. When I went to the ball that evening, I was received with open arms by every one. Oh, my fame was established! I really think that I might have married half the pretty girls in the room that night. Never was man so courted. It certainly was very flattering to be so received; but yet it was painful, too, to mark the contrast from the year before. *It certainly was not my fault that I had no cause to plead the year before.*' "

In about eight years from his call to the bar, Lord Eldon was in the high-road to its highest honours.

We have minutely detailed his progress at the most critical periods, with a view to a few observations we have to offer regarding the difficulties and chances of the profession; but before venturing on them, it may be as well to strengthen our conclusions by a parallel —to see how many of his great predecessors and contemporaries adopted the same method of study, or got on in the same manner.

Somers flourished a little before the period when legal honours ceased to depend principally upon intrigue and faction. He had made himself useful to his party by some well-written pamphlets, and the young Earl (afterwards Duke) of Shrewsbury was his fast friend; still, when he was proposed as junior counsel for the Seven Bishops, they objected to him as too young (he was then thirty-seven) and too little known. Serjeant Pollexfen insisted on their retaining him, and his speech for the defence laid the foundation of his fame.

Lord Hardwicke, the son of an attorney, and bred up in an attorney's office, was fortunate enough to obtain the patronage of Lord Macclesfield, and that noble and learned but most unscrupulous personage forced him at once into the front rank of the profession. He was only twenty-nine years of age, and five years' standing at the bar, when he was called

up from his *first* circuit to be made Solicitor-General. Having had little or no leading business, it was confidently expected that he would break down; but his talents and knowledge proved fully equal to the extraordinary call made upon them.

Thurlow dashed into practice with the same suddenness, and was indebted for his first lift to patronage; though he certainly did not obtain it by the quality for which Lord Hardwicke was famous — bowing, smiling urbanity. His favourite haunt was Nando's coffee-house, near the Temple, where a large attendance of professional loungers was attracted by the fame of the punch and the charms of the landlady, which, the small wits said, were duly admired by and at the bar. One evening the *Douglas case* was the topic of discussion, and some gentlemen engaged in it were regretting the want of a competent person to digest a mass of documentary evidence. Thurlow being present, one of them, half in earnest, suggested him, and it was agreed to give him the job. A brief was delivered with the papers; but the cause did not come on for more than eight years afterwards, and it was a purely collateral incident to which he was indebted for his rise. This employment brought him acquainted with the famous Duchess of Queensberry, the friend of Pope, Gay, and Swift, and an excellent judge of talent. She saw at once the value of a man like Thurlow, and recommended Lord Bute to secure him by a silk gown. He was made king's counsel in 1761, rather less than seven years after his call to the bar. He ran greater risks than Lord Hardwicke, because his business had been hitherto next to nothing; but he had far more of the *vis vivida* and the unhesitating self-confidence which enables an untried man to beat down obstacles.

Dunning got nothing for some years after his call to the bar, which was about 1756. "He travelled

the Western Circuit," (says the historian of Devonshire, Mr. Polwhele,) "but had not a single brief; and had Lavater been at Exeter in the year 1759, he must have sent Counsellor Dunning to the hospital of idiots. Not a feature marked him for the son of wisdom." He was, notwithstanding, recommended by Mr. Hussey, a King's Counsel, to the Chairman of the East India Company, who was looking out for some one to draw up an answer to a memorial delivered by the Dutch government. The manner in which Dunning performed this piece of service gained him some useful connections, and an opportune fit of the gout, which disabled one of the leaders of the Western Circuit, did still more for him. The leader in question handed over his briefs to Dunning, who made the most of the opportunity. His crowning triumph was his argument against the legality of General Warrants delivered in 1765. He was indebted for his brief in this famous case to Wilkes, whose acquaintance he had formed at Nando's, the Grecian, and other coffee-houses about the Temple, which, seventy years ago, were still the resort of men of wit and pleasure.

Kenyon rose slowly and fairly through the general impression entertained at the bar of the extent of his legal knowledge; but this impression was nearly twelve years in reaching the brief-bestowing branch of the profession. He was brought into notice by Thurlow, to whom he acted as what is technically termed "Devil," that is, looked out cases, prepared pleadings, and drew up opinions for him.

Lord Camden (a judge's son, Etonian, and Cantab) went the Western Circuit for ten or twelve years without success, and at length resolved on trying one circuit more and then retiring upon his fellowship. His friend Henley (Lord Northington) hearing of this determination, managed to get him retained as

his own junior in a cause of some importance, and then absented himself on the plea of illness. Lord Camden won the cause and prospered.

Lord Mansfield came to the bar with a high reputation, but it was rather for literary taste, accomplishment, and eloquence, than law. He "drank champagne with the wits," as we learn from Prior; and Mr. Halliday relates, that one morning Mr. Murray was surprised by a gentleman of Lincoln's Inn, who took the liberty of entering his room without the ceremonious introduction of a servant, in the singular act of practising the graces of a speech at a glass, while Pope sat by in the character of a friendly spectator. It is from a couplet of Pope's we learn how he first became known in the profession —

> "Graced as thou art with all the power of words,
> So known, so honour'd, in the House of Lords."

A piece of bathos thus parodied by Cibber —

> "Persuasion tips his tongue whene'er he talks,
> And he has chambers in the King's Bench walks."

He is reported to have said, that he never knew the difference between no professional income and three thousand a-year; and the case of *Cibber* and *Sloper* is specified as his starting-point. The tradition goes, that Sergeant Eyre being seized with a fit (the god who cuts the knot always comes in this questionable shape), the conduct of the defence devolved on Murray; who after a short adjournment, granted by the favour of Chief-Justice Lee, made so excellent a speech, that clients rushed to him in crowds. The case was admirably adapted to his abilities, being an action of *crim. con.* brought by a conniving husband against a weak young man of fortune. But the story is apocryphal at best. There is no mention of the Sergeant's illness in the printed accounts of the trial.

On the contrary, a long speech by him is duly reported; and it appears that Murray was the fourth counsel in the cause. He certainly made a speech, and probably spoke well; but we disbelieve the tradition which makes him the hero of the day. *Cibber* v. *Sloper* was tried in December 1738; Pope's lines were published in 1737. How could a man "so known, so honoured" for his eloquence, be raised from obscurity by a speech? It was a stepping-stone, not the keystone.

When Lord Loughborough first came to London, he was a constant attendant at the green room, and associated with Macklin, Foote, and Sheridan (the father of Richard Brinsley), who assisted him to soften down his Scotch accent. But the main chance was not neglected. It is stated in Boswell's Johnson, that he solicited Strahan the printer, a countryman, to get him employed in city causes; and his brother-in-law, Sir Harry Erskine, procured him the patronage of Lord Bute. When a man of decided talent and good connexion does not stand on trifles, there is no necessity for speculating on the precise causes of his success.

There is hardly a surviving friend of Lord Erskine's who has not heard the history of his first lucky hit from his own lips. The author of the "Clubs of London" has undertaken to report his very words:—

"'I had scarcely a shilling in my pocket when I got my first retainer. It was sent me by a Captain Baillie of the navy, who held an office at the Board of Greenwich Hospital, and I was to show cause in the Michaelmas term against a rule that had been obtained in the preceding term, calling on him to show cause why a criminal information for a libel, reflecting on Lord Sandwich's conduct as governor of that charity, should not be filed against him. I had met, during the long vacation, this Captain Baillie at a friend's table, and after dinner I expressed myself with some warmth, probably

with some eloquence, on the corruption of Lord Sandwich as First Lord of the Admiralty, and then adverted to the scandalous practices imputed to him with regard to Greenwich Hospital. Baillie nudged the person who sat next to him, and asked who I was. Being told that I had just been called to the bar, and had been formerly in the navy, Baillie exclaimed with an oath, "Then I'll have him for my counsel!" I trudged down to Westminster Hall when I got the brief, and being the junior of five, who should be heard before me, never dreamt that the court would hear me at all. The argument came on. Dunning, Bearcroft, Wallace, Bower, Hargrave, were all heard at considerable length, and I was to follow. Hargrave was long-winded, and tired the court. It was a bad omen; but, as my good fortune would have it, he was afflicted with the strangury, and was obliged to retire once or twice in the course of his argument. This protracted the cause so long, that, when he had finished, Lord Mansfield said that the remaining counsel should be heard the next morning. This was exactly what I wished. I had the whole night to arrange in my chambers what I had to say the next morning, and I took the court with their faculties awake and freshened, succeeded quite to my own satisfaction (sometimes the surest proof that you have satisfied others); and as I marched along the Hall after the rising of the judges, the attorneys flocked around me with their retainers. I have since flourished, but I have always blessed God for the providential strangury of poor Hargrave.'"

In a more particular, and apparently more accurate, note of the same story, taken by an eminent poet (Rogers), it is stated that the other counsel proposed a compromise at consultation; that Erskine stood out, and that Baillie flung his arms round his neck in a transport of grateful confidence. According to this note, the number of retaining fees which Erskine said he carried home was sixty-two. Now, retaining fees are usually paid to the clerk at chambers; but, taking the statement to mean nothing more than that business came in very rapidly in consequence of the speech, still we must be pardoned for suggesting that

the reports of the period do not bear out the supposition; and that the speech, excellent as it was, was not of the sort to win the confidence of attorneys, particularly those passages which brought him into collision with the court. The effect in our day would strongly resemble that produced by Alan Fairford in the case of Peebles and Plainstanes: — "The worst of the whole was, that six agents who had each come to the separate resolution of thrusting a retaining fee into Alan's hand as he left the court, shook their heads as they returned the money into their leathern pouches, and said, 'That the lad was clever, but they would like to see more of him before they engaged him in the way of business.'"

Erskine was next engaged to draw up Admiral Keppel's defence, which was spoken by the Admiral. For this service he received a bank-note for 1000*l.*, which he ran off to flourish in the eyes of his friend Reynolds, exclaiming "*Voilà* the nonsuit of cow-beef!" He was employed in two or three other cases of public interest on account of his naval knowledge, and the extraordinary powers he displayed in them speedily led to a large general business. It is now acknowledged that Erskine's best quality was the one ordinary observers would be least likely to give him credit for—sagacity in the conduct of a cause.

Sir William Jones made his forensic *début* about the same time as Erskine, though, according to the account given in Miss Hawkins's "Memoirs" on her brother's authority, without producing an equally favourable impression. He spoke for nearly an hour, with great confidence, in a highly declamatory tone, and with studied action; impressing all present, who had ever heard of Cicero or Hortensius, with the belief that he had worked himself up into the notion of being one or both of them for the occasion. Being little acquainted with the bar, he spoke of a case as

having been argued by "one Mr. Baldwin," a gentleman in large practice sitting in the first row. This caused a titter; but the grand effect was yet to come. The case involved certain family disagreements, and he had occasion to mention a governess. Some wicked wag told him he had been too hard upon her; so, the day following, he rose as soon as the judges had taken their seats, and began in the same high tone and with both hands extended—"My Lords, I have been informed, to my inexpressible mortification and regret, that, in what I yesterday had the honour to state to your Lordships, I was understood to mean to say that Miss —— was a harlot." He got no further: *solvuntur risu tabulæ;* and, so soon as the judges could speak for laughing, they hastened to assure him that no impression unfavourable to Miss ——'s morals had been made upon the court. Notwithstanding this inauspicious commencement, and his fondness for literature, Jones obtained a fair share of business. His "Essay on Bailments" is considered the best written English law-book on a practical subject. None can be placed alongside of it, for style and method, except Stephen's "Treatise on the Principles of Pleading."

Lord Ellenborough pursued the most laborious path to distinction. He practised several years as a special pleader, and joined the Northern Circuit with a formed connection. He rose into fame by his defence of Warren Hastings, who employed him at the instance of Sir Thomas Rumbold, a connection of the Law family.

The rise of Sir Samuel Shepherd is thus described by his son:—

"For the first two or three years his advancement was slow, but gradual; it was not long, however, before good fortune or undeviating attention brought him into greater notice.

"Two of his earliest arguments of any importance, for which he had made copious notes, were called on successively upon the same day. In the first he was much embarrassed; at the commencement of the second he fortunately dropped his papers, which became displaced and useless; this obliged him to trust to his memory, which did not fail him, for the cases previously collected; his eye was thus unshackled from that constant reference to notes, so often injurious to the effect of a good argument; and being thrown upon his own resources, his manner, naturally excellent, became more free and impressive, and he received a great compliment from Lord Mansfield at the conclusion of the argument. The court, too, suspended the judgment they were about to pronounce against him, and which they afterwards pronounced upon further deliberation. From this time he came into full practice, as appears by the frequent recurrence of his name in the reports of that period." *

The chief-justiceship of the Queen's Bench and that of the Common Pleas were by turns pressed upon Sir Samuel Shepherd; but he refused both on account of his deafness, principally because he should be obliged to sit alone as a criminal judge during circuit.

Romilly's account of his own early life is replete with useful hints. After describing the circuit mode of life, he says:—

"This sort of amusement, however, was for a consider-

* Memoir of the Right Honourable Sir Samuel Shepherd. By Henry John Shepherd, Esq. (printed for private circulation). The author of this pleasing and appropriate tribute to the memory of a distinguished father, was himself pre-eminently distinguished by talent and accomplishment,—by the finest sense of honour, the truest generosity of feeling, the most delicate perception of humour, and the utmost refinement of taste. He is the author of an approved work on "Election Law," and of a poem, "Pedro of Castille;" which contains many passages of genuine poetry, and is obviously the emanation of a graceful fancy and a richly cultivated mind. The modesty of his character, and the extreme fastidiousness with which he regarded his own works and efforts, alone prevented him from obtaining a far larger share of forensic and literary fame.

able time the only profit that I derived from the circuit. Many of the barristers upon it had friends and connections in some of the counties through which we passed, which served as an introduction of them to business; but for myself, I was without connections everywhere, and at the end of my sixth or seventh circuit I had made no progress. I had been, it is true, in a few causes; but all the briefs I had had were delivered to me by London attorneys, who had seen my face in London, and who happened to be strangers to the juniors on the circuit. They afforded me no opportunity of displaying any talents, if I had possessed them, and they led to nothing; I might have continued thus a mere spectator of the business done by others, quite to the end of the sixteen years which elapsed before I gave up every part of the circuit, if I had not resolved, though it was very inconvenient to me on account of the business which I began to get in London, to attend the quarter sessions of some midland county. There is, indeed, a course by which an unconnected man may be pretty sure to gain business, and which is not unfrequently practised. It is to gain an acquaintance with the attorneys at the different assize towns, to show them great civility, to pay them great court, and to affect before them a display of wit, knowledge, and parts. But he who disdains such unworthy means, may, if he do not attend the quarter sessions, pass his whole life in travelling round the circuit, and in daily attendances in court, without obtaining a single brief. *When a man first makes his appearance in court, no attorney is disposed to try the experiment whether he has any talents; and when a man's face has become familiar by his having been long a silent spectator of the business done by others, his not being employed is supposed to proceed from his incapacity, and is alone considered as sufficient evidence that he must have been tried and rejected.*"

Under this conviction, he joined the Warwick sessions, where the bar happened to be neither strong nor numerous, and soon got into business; which led, as he anticipated, to business on the circuit. He was gradually acquiring, during the same period, a large practice in Chancery; but his *début* there was unlucky. He grew so nervous and confused,

that his old master, Lally, prognosticated a complete failure.

At the present moment, the bench and bar might furnish a long list of distinguished men of all grades of talent and knowledge; yet we should be puzzled to name one who sprang into great practice at a bound; and it is a remarkable fact that most of the leading barristers are past forty years of age, and few of less than twenty years' standing in the profession. This justifies a suspicion, that the effect of lucky hits is somewhat over-estimated in the traditional instances. Mr. Twiss, however, thinks that a change has taken place in the constitution of the body, which may account for the difference.

"The two well-employed opportunities of *Ackroyd* v. *Smithson* and the 'Clitheroe Petition,' had left the success of Mr. Scott a matter no longer doubtful. At the present day, from the great competition of very learned and very able practitioners, a few occasional opportunities do little, however they be improved. Among the more influential class of attorneys and solicitors, it has become usual to bring up a son, or other near relation, to the bar*, who, if his industry and ability be such as can at all justify his friends in employing him, absorbs all the business which they and their connection can bestow; and the number of barristers, thus powerfully supported, is now so great, that few men lacking such an advantage can secure a hold upon business. But at the time when Mr. Scott began his professional life, the usage had not grown up of coming into the field with a 'following' already secured. Education being less general, fewer competitors attempted the bar; and, even among the educated classes, a large portion of the adventurous men devoted themselves to naval and military pursuits, which have now been deprived of attraction by a peace of more than a quarter of a century. In those days,

* It would be nearer the truth to say, that attorneys and solicitors now belong to the class from which the bar is principally recruited.

therefore, it might well happen, as with Mr. Scott it actually did, that a couple of good opportunities, ably used, would make the fortune of an assiduous barrister in London."

We do not believe that the constitution of the bar is much altered ; but its effective members have been more than trebled in number within living memory; while equity business has not more than doubled, and common law business has positively decreased. Mr. Shepherd says, that when Sir Samuel began attending the King's Bench, there were but three rows of seats, and they were rarely full. It is stated by Mr. Townsend, and repeated by Mr. Twiss, that the number of counsel regularly practising at the Chancery Bar when Lord Eldon joined it, was only twelve or fifteen. The cause lists at Guildhall are not half the length they used to be. The late Sir Albert Pell told the present writer, that when he joined the Western Circuit the number of barristers did not average above twenty-five, and that it was an understood thing among the leaders to procure every new-comer a chance. The number now exceeds fifty; the cause lists are shorter than they were in his time; and all sympathy is at an end. Besides the fear of litigation (which has now grown into something more than a proverbial saw, which every one repeated and no one acted on), there are plain specific causes for the change. The most profitable part of sessions practice (Appeals) received its death-blow from the new Poor-Law; and the improvements effected by the Common-Law Commissioners (for which the public are indebted to Lord Brougham), nip in the bud a vast number of lawsuits, which, under the old system, would have gone on to trial and borne briefs.*

* When a defendant was at liberty to plead the general issue — *i. e.* a broad general denial of the demand — the parties frequently came into court in entire ignorance of the precise point in dispute ; and as technical objections were also allowed *ad libitum*, there was always a chance of

It may be taken, therefore, as an established truth, that there are fewer prizes and more blanks in the lottery. But is the mode of drawing altered? In our opinion, very little. If a man has connections, he is pushed on at starting. If he has not, he must wait. It was always thus; and it is clear, from Lord Eldon's many opportunities, that he did not want backers. We see the increasing difficulties that beset the modern candidate; but it strikes us that attorneys' sons and relations must suffer as much from the general crowding as the rest. Their proportional advantage is obviously diminished by competitors of the same class; and, as a matter of fact, we do not find that the avenues are blocked up by them. Three out of four of the present judges and leading counsel are not sons or near relations of attorneys; and, could the private history of each of these be read, it would appear that there is still a large field for knowledge and capacity. In most instances, it would be found that they availed themselves of some fortunate opportunity to establish a name, and gradually dropped into business as others dropped off. Legal promotion, like military, depends on deaths and other vacancies. It is very seldom, indeed, that an established leader is displaced; what the lucky hit does, is simply to indicate the successor.

At the same time, it is absurd to say that merit is sure to be appreciated if the aspirant will bide his time; for the time may never come, or come too late — when his faculties have been deteriorated by disuse, and his spirit is broken by disappointment —

defeating a claim by an unforeseen objection or defence. Under the new mode of pleading, they are compelled to arrive at a precise issue; each considers whether he can support his allegation by evidence; and the one who finds he cannot, gives in. (Since this was written, the new County Courts have come into full play and still further reduced the business of Westminster Hall.)

when "all he had wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds." What is to ensure him even the few occasional briefs which are absolutely necessary to enable him to profit by the grand opportunity when it does come?—for the management of causes is not to be learned by mere observation or reflection; some practice is indispensable; and there is much that is merely technical, almost mechanical, in the arts of advocacy. In the front rank, competition is more open, and merit generally decides; but the difficulty is to clear the intervening shallows, and get fairly afloat. A man who has merit without connection, will not be employed till he is known; and he can hardly be known till he is employed.

Yet it may be that nobody is to blame, neither the attorney for not choosing, nor the barrister for not being chosen. When there is not enough for all, some must starve. An overstocked profession is like a crew trying to save themselves upon a raft scarcely large enough to carry half of them; or like the inmates of the Black Hole at Calcutta, where all who could not get near the aperture in the wall were suffocated—the survivors owing their safety as much to position and selfishness, as strength. Erskine once declared in Parliament, that "success oftener depended upon accident, and certain physical advantages, than upon the most brilliant talent and the most profound erudition." A high-spirited and popular leader (Thesiger) lately illustrated the matter thus:—"When I look round on my competitors, and consider my own qualifications, the wonder to me is, how I ever got to the place I now occupy. I can only account for it, by comparing the forensic career to one of the crossings in our great thoroughfares. You arrive just when it is clear, and get over at once; another finds it blocked up, is kept waiting,

and arrives too late at his destination, *though the better pedestrian of the two.*" Does it not sometimes (certainly not in this gentleman's case) resemble the Strand on Lord Mayor's Day? Those who, like Swift's fat man in the crowd, do not mind what fuss they make, whose toes they tread on, to what extent they splash themselves, or how many quiet people they thrust off the pavement or against the wall, always clear the press soonest and get first to Charing Cross or Temple Bar.

According to Mr. Sergeant (the late Mr. Justice) Talfourd, the undisputed leader of his circuit, "mere stupidity, accompanied by a certain degree of fluency, is no inconsiderable power. It enables its possessor to protract the contest long after he is beaten, because he neither understands his own case, nor the arguments by which he has been answered. It is a weapon of defence, behind which he obtains protection, not only from his adversaries but from the judge. If the learned person who presides, wearied out with endless irrelevancies, should attempt to stop him, he will insist on his privilege to be dull, and obtain the admiration of the audience by his firmness in supporting the rights of the bar. In these points, a sensitive and acute advocate has no chance of rivalling him in the estimation of the bystanders."

Here is Romilly's sketch of the leader of his circuit when he joined:—"Next to him (Sergeant Hill) in rank, but far before him in business, and indeed completely at the head of the circuit, stood ——; who without talents, without learning, without any one qualification for his profession, had by the mere friendship, or rather companionship, of Mr. Justice ——, obtained the favour of a silk gown; and by a forward manner, and the absence of commanding abilities in others, had got to be employed in almost every cause. The merits of a horse he understood

perfectly well; and when in these, as sometimes happened, consisted the merits of a cause, he acquitted himself admirably; but in other cases nothing could be more injudicious than his conduct. In spite, however, of his defects, and notwithstanding the obvious effects of his mismanagement, he continued for many years, while I was upon the circuit, in possession of a very large portion of business."

There was truth as well as *fun* in the late James Smith's induction. "The *élite* of our universities, with the most promising recruits from all classes, are sent almost as a thing of course to the bar. The most distinguished of these, therefore, may fairly be regarded as the most distinguished of their contemporaries. Now, I remember when Marryatt and Mingay (naming two gentlemen not remarkable for refinement or cultivation) were at the head of the practising members of the profession. It follows that Marryatt and Mingay were the very cream of intellect, the most favourable representatives of the wit, learning, and eloquence of their age."

One of these boasted that, from the hour he left school, he had never opened any book but a law book. Sir Vicary Gibbs confessed to having read two unprofessional publications; one being "Damberger's Travels," which he had actually indexed. In his case the exclusive mode answered, *i. e.* he became a successful lawyer of the technical narrow-minded sort; but when the example is recommended for general adoption, we are tempted to exclaim with Chief-Justice Bushe:—"Such a man depreciates the genius which he does not possess, and overrates the handicraft he is equal to; he would shear a splendid profession of its beams, and cut it down to trade. But I will not believe that the profession I preferred, because I thought it the most liberal, is such a low mechanic craft as this. I will not give up the Burghs,

and the Erskines, and the Currans of the profession, to those fair jurisprudents and learned applicants of the law, who scorn the genius that scorns them."

We also take liberty to suggest that clear arrangement, correct language, familiarity with the topics of the day, some power of illustration, and some acquaintance with the elementary parts of the popular sciences, are not unreasonably expected from the members of a learned profession; which, dealing by turns with every branch of human knowledge, brings by turns every faculty, talent, and accomplishment into play. We have heard a libel case laughed out of court by a happy allusion to the Vicar of Wakefield: in order to fix the meaning of the words, "entertainment of the stage," in an Act of Parliament, (10 Geo. II. c. 28,) it became necessary to review the whole dramatic literature of the period: the arguments regarding Lady Hewley's charity turn on the nicest points of theological controversy and biblical criticism: the Chancellor has just decided a case which depended on art and connoisseurship; and almost every patent case involves some new discovery in chemistry or mechanics. It would, therefore, be no reflection on a lawyer to say, with the change of a word, what was wittily said of a celebrated Cambridge Professor, that science (read, *law*,) is his forte, and omniscience his foible. Without that readiness of apprehension, which nothing but extended cultivation can perfect, he is not safe a moment. Lord Eldon (who, however, once announced from the bench in the Court of Chancery that he had been reading "Paradise Lost" during the long vacation) took avowedly the means he thought best adapted to gain a speedy competence, and never thought of playing the great game till it was forced upon him. He then suffered greatly from the want of liberal knowledge and a more cultivated taste.

Examples of a different tendency may be mentioned; but, speaking from our own observation, we should say, that it is not the literature that does harm, but the reputation for it. A sergeant who knows three times as much law as a learned brother who knows nothing else, may be reputed the worse lawyer of the two; but not unless he gives his literary pursuits a turn calculated to attract attention; and then he is compensated in fame.

In Wilberforce's Diary is this entry: — "Saw Lord Eldon, and had a long talk with him on the best mode of study for the young Grants to be lawyers. The Chancellor's reply was not encouraging: — 'I have no rule to give them, but that they must make up their minds to live like a hermit and work like a horse.'" At first, we incline to think, he must—or rather that little is to be expected from students who do not do so of their own accord; but happily the hermit and horse period need not be long, or it would be better to turn galley slave. "Let a man do all he can in any one branch of study, he must exhaust himself and doze over it, or vary his pursuit, or else be idle. All our real labour lies in a nutshell. The mind makes at some period or other one Herculean effort, and the rest is mechanical. We have to climb a steep and narrow precipice at first, but after that the way is broad and easy, where we may drive several accomplishments abreast."* As to the overwhelming labour of the profession *when it has been learned*, the late Lord Abinger used to boast that he dined out every day during the whole of a long Guildhall

* Hazlitt's "Plain Speaker," vol. i. p. 142. Mr. Charles Butler tells us that Fearne, the author of the "Essay on Contingent Remainders," was profoundly versed in medicine, chemistry, and mathematics — had obtained a patent for dyeing scarlet — and written a treatise on the Greek accent. The period of life at which students impair their health by study is generally from eighteen to twenty-five.

sittings; and lawyers in full business spend evening after evening in the House of Commons.

To bring this topic to a conclusion — as we run over the foregoing lists of examples, nothing strikes us more than the variety of plans of study, modes of life, kinds of talent, and degrees of industry, presented by it. Thurlow at Nando's, and Wedderburn in the green-room; Murray before the looking-glass, and Eldon with the wet towel round his head; a judge's son (Camden) neglected for twelve years, and an attorney's (Hardwicke) fairly forced into the solicitor-generalship in five; Kenyon loving law, and Romilly detesting it; Dunning brought forward by an East India director, and Erskine by an old seaman; — such things set all speculation at defiance, or bring us back at last to the sage remark of Vauvenargues, that "everything may be looked for from men and from events."

It is related in the "Anecdote Book," that during the formation of the coalition government Mr. Fox called on Lord Thurlow, and requested him to retain the Great Seal. Lord Thurlow refused, and it was then put into commission; — the Lords Commissioners being Lord Loughborough, then Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas, Mr. Justice Ashhurst, and Mr. Baron Hotham. With the view of gratifying some friends of the new government, the Lords Commissioners were authorised to confer a limited number of silk gowns, and it was found impossible to pass over Mr. Scott. He received a message from the Duke of Portland (the Premier) offering to include him in the list. After some hesitation he accepted the offer, saying that he felt honoured and gratified in doing so. This was on the Wednesday. On Thursday he learned that Erskine and Pigott, his juniors at the bar, were also to have silk gowns, and were to be sworn in on the Friday, the day before him-

self, which would have given them precedence. He instantly wrote to retract his acceptance; and, on being called before the Commissioners, steadily persevered in refusing to waive his professional rank for any one.

"One of them said Mr. Pigott was senior at the bar to Mr. Erskine, and yet he had consented to let Mr. Erskine take precedence of him. I answered — 'Mr. Pigott is the best judge for himself: I cannot consent to give way, either to Mr. Erskine or Mr. Pigott.' Another said, 'Mr. Scott, you are too proud.' — 'My lord with all respect, I state it is not pride: I cannot accept the gown upon these terms.' After much difficulty, and particularly as the patents of Erskine and Pigott had passed the seal, the matter seems to have been arranged; for on the Saturday I received a patent, appointing me to be next in rank to Peckham, and placing Erskine and Pigott below me, though in fact both of them had been sworn in the day before me; and that patent I have to this day. 'Did you think,' said Mr. Farrer to him, 'that it was so important to insist upon retaining your rank?' — 'It was everything,' he replied, with great earnestness; 'I owed my future success to it.'"

Though premiers interfere occasionally, this kind of promotion is considered to depend altogether on the possessor of the Great Seal; and Lord Eldon was afterwards strongly censured for his mode of dispensing it. To enable the reader to form his own opinion, and also to enter into the spirit of the foregoing passage, we will briefly explain the nature of professional rank.

A barrister who is made king's (now queen's) counsel, or who receives a patent of precedence, sits in the front row (within the bar), wears a silk gown instead of a stuff one, and takes precedence of the rest of the bar, next after his immediate senior of the same grade. Originally the king's counsel were the salaried counsel of the crown; but since the increase in number (rendered necessary by the increase of the profession and

the courts) the salary has been discontinued, and they may now be regarded simply as the field officers of the law. Independently of the honour, the advantage (or disadvantage) of a silk gown is, that it puts the wearer in the best position for leading causes; for, according to the etiquette of the English bar, the client cannot fix the order in which his counsel shall be heard, or assign them parts adapted to their capacity. This is regulated by seniority. Captain Baillie, for example, could not have said, "Mr. Erskine has eloquence and spirit, and is fully master of my views. He shall lead my case. Mr. Hargrave is a sound lawyer, but a bad speaker. Let him keep in the background, and supply Mr. Erskine with authorities." In this instance the strangury set matters right; but we remember an instance in which Lord Brougham was intended to lead a libel case; immediately before the trial it was discovered that the other counsel retained (a mere special pleader) was his senior, and the mistake proved irremediable.

This patronage, therefore, is a delicate matter as regards the distribution of business. It is not less so as regards the character of the profession; for the Chancellor is thereby enabled to distinguish those who reflect credit on it.

It is undeniable that Lord Eldon discharged the silk-distributing duty of his office very badly. His political prejudices, and his habits of procrastination, proved equally mischievous. The late Lord Abinger, Lord Brougham, and Lord Denman were proscribed —Sir Charles Wetherall postponed. A lame attempt is made in the "Anecdote Book" to defend the proscription of Lord Brougham; on the ground that, in consequence of the line he took on the Queen's Trial, the appointment was personally offensive to George IV. But it was Lord Eldon's duty to resist such a preju-

dice, and resign rather than be responsible for it. What becomes of the privileges of the bar, if an advocate is to be subjected to this sort of disqualification for discharging his duty fearlessly? or what becomes of ministerial responsibility, if the minister may fall back on the caprices of the king? Had Lord Eldon shown himself in earnest, George IV. would not have refused to him what he granted at once to Mr. Canning or Lord Lyndhurst.

In the case of Lord Abinger, a great injustice was done, and a great injury inflicted, without the shadow of an excuse. He would have been undisputed leader of the Northern Circuit six or eight years sooner, had he received his rank when he was first entitled to it. He and Sir Charles Wetherall had been more than twenty-five years at the bar when they were promoted; Lord Eldon about seven, and he was senior to Erskine and Pigott. There can be no doubt that the principal object of the move was to oblige Erskine; and Lord Eldon stood out for his rightful precedence, from a belief that a concession might be regarded as an avowal of inferiority.

A few days after he received his silk gown he was elected for Weobly, a borough in the patronage of Lord Weymouth, to whom he was recommended by Lord Thurlow; it being expressly stipulated that he was not to be bound by the opinions of the patron. Erskine was elected for Portsmouth, on the Government interest. They took their seats at the same time, made their maiden speeches the same night, and were simultaneously voted fresh illustrations of the saying, that lawyers do not succeed in Parliament. But it strikes us that this saying is in one sense a truism, and in every other false.

It is true that all eminent lawyers do not become equally eminent in Parliament; but may not the remark be extended to other orders and classes? Do

historians, essayists, poets, wits, metaphysicians, invariably sustain their reputation? Witness Gibbon, Addison, Byron, George Selwyn, David Hartley. Does the country gentleman retain his relative importance? Is the merchant as influential as upon 'Change? The scene is shifted; the required talent is different; the public is a wider public; the competition is indefinitely increased. Because a lawyer excels Peckham and Pigott in the Court of King's Bench, he is expected to excel or equal Pitt, Fox, Burke, and Sheridan in the House of Commons! Nay, he is to prove a match for the best of them, with one hand tied behind him. After a morning spent in an exhausting contest before judges or juries, and an afternoon in consultations, with hardly a moment to prepare himself, he is to encounter first-rate debaters fresh from their clubs, who have spent their whole lives in the political atmosphere, and given their full attention to the subject of the night.

Suppose, at the end of one of the grand party conflicts, prolonged till daylight, Erskine had said to Fox, "Now, come across the Hall and defend Hardy. You know the case as well as I do, and there are no technicalities involved in it." Would Fox have sustained the reputation acquired by such speeches as that on the Westminster scrutiny? Would he have delivered anything at all approximating in effect to Erskine's famous speech for the defence, which stands like a landmark in history? The truth is, unrivalled pre-eminence (like Erskine's) in one walk, implies a peculiar kind of genius or combination of qualities, and renders equal pre-eminence in another almost impossible. There is no instance on record (unless Michael Angelo be one) of the same man's standing *on the very apex* of two arts, sciences, professions, or pursuits, even those more congenial than politics and law; yet we do not complain that the greatest chemist

is not the greatest botanist, nor gravely lay down as an axiom that painters do not succeed in poetry. Even if we adopt Dr. Johnson's notion, that genius is nothing more than great general powers of mind capable of being turned any way, and admit that "a man who has vigour may walk to the east just as well as to the west;" still, a man cannot walk as far both ways, or cover as much ground, as two men of much inferior vigour, each taking his line and keeping to it.

The real wonder, therefore, is, or ought to be, how so many lawyers have succeeded; for the list is a highly respectable one. Somers was the constitutional and parliamentary organ of his party. Murray was regularly pitted against the Great Commoner. "They alone" (says Lord Chesterfield) "can inflame or quiet the House; they alone are attended to in that numerous and noisy assembly, that you may hear a pin fall while either of them is speaking." Lord North is described by Gibbon as placing his chief dependence on Thurlow and Wedderburn. Dunning was an excellent debater. Fox himself grew anxious when he had to answer Sir William Grant; and the present Lord Lansdowne (then Lord Henry Petty) was the only speaker who ever completely did away the effect of one of his best speeches (on the Orders in Council) by a reply. It was hardly possible to fill a prouder position in Parliament than Romilly. Dundas had been Lord Advocate, and Perceval Solicitor-General. Mr. O'Connell was at one time the undisputed leader of the Irish bar. Lord Plunkett was quite perfect as a debater. Sir William Follett and Mr. Pemberton Leigh have surely succeeded in the House of Commons; while Lord Brougham and Lord Lyndhurst are not generally thought to have failed in either House.

The list might be indefinitely extended, if we included those who (like Lord Eldon) were always

equal to their work, though they acquired no distinctive reputation as speakers; or those who have risen to eminence after going through the training of the bar, like Pitt and Tierney, who both went the Western Circuit. But we have not shrunk from the common mode of arguing the question, palpably unfair as it is; according to which, no one is to count who has not been occupied during the best portion of his life with law, and expended his best energies on it.

It was said of Sheridan, when he delayed writing another comedy, that he was afraid of the author of "The School for Scandal." Erskine, when he rose to speak, might reasonably have stood in awe of the advocate who defended Lord George Gordon. It was his own reputation that bore him down; and one of the first of living authorities on such a subject, Lord Brougham, thinks that his parliamentary talents were underrated, and that, had he appeared at any other period, and given more attention to the practice, "there is little chance that he would have been eclipsed even as a debater." This could not be said of Mr. Scott. His high reputation for legal knowledge ensured attention when he spoke, but nothing could be worse than the taste and style of his early speeches.

He broke ground in opposition to the famous East India Bill, and began with his favourite topic, the honesty of his own intentions, and the purity of his own conscience: —

"He spoke in respectful terms of Lord North, and more highly still of Mr. Fox; but even to Mr. Fox it was not fitting that so vast an influence should be intrusted. As Brutus said of Cæsar —

——'he would be crown'd!
How that might change his nature,—there's the question.'

It was an aggravation of the affliction he felt, that the cause of it should originate with one to whom the nation had so long looked up; a wound from him was doubly painful. Like Joab, he gave the shake of friendship, but the other hand held a dagger, with which he dispatched the constitution. Here Mr. Scott, after an apology for alluding to sacred writ, read from the Book of Revelation some verse which he regarded as typical of the intended innovations in the affairs of the English East India Company:—'And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.' Here," said Mr. Scott, "I believe there is a mistake of six months—the proposed duration of the bill being four years, or forty-eight months. 'And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads.'—Here places, pensions, and peerages are clearly marked out.—'And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the Great'—plainly the East India Company—'is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird.'"

He read a passage from Thucydides to prove that men are more irritated by injustice than by violence, and described the country crying out for a respite like Desdemona—

> "Kill me to-morrow—let me live to-night—
> But half an hour!"

This strange jumble was well quizzed by Sheridan, and Mr. Scott soon found out that rhetorical embellishment was not his line; for his subsequent speeches are less ornate. They were not always plain, however, in the full sense of the word, and he was never cured of the habit of talking of his conscience. In the squibs of the period, their obscurity

forms the point of the jokes levelled at him. Thus, among the pretended translations of Lord Belgrave's famous Greek quotation, the following couplet was attributed to him:—

> "With metaphysic art his speech he plann'd,
> And said — what nobody could understand."

He was certainly too much given to refining and distinguishing; but a lawyer speaking principally on legal subjects, will frequently, without any fault of his, be unintelligible to a shifting and impatient audience like the House of Commons. His opinion was always duly appreciated, and he took care not to impair its value by lending it for party purposes. In the affair of the Westminster scrutiny, he considered the high bailiff to be acting contrary to law in delaying the return, and said so in the House. Fox showed his sense of this highly commendable act of candour, by the tone of respectful courtesy in which he invariably alluded to him.

In 1788, Lord Mansfield resigned the chief-justiceship of the King's Bench; Lord Kenyon, then Master of the Rolls, succeeded him; Sir R. P. Arden (Lord Alvanley), then attorney-general, succeeded Lord Kenyon; the solicitor-general (Macdonald) became attorney-general; and the solicitor-generalship was conferred upon Mr. (who thereupon became Sir John) Scott. The story goes that he did not wish to be knighted; but the king said, "Pooh, pooh! you must be served like the rest," and knighted him. Mr. Twiss says that the ceremony had not then become a matter of course, and that he was really taken by surprise.

The value of such a coadjutor was soon experienced by Mr. Pitt. In the Regency debates of 1789, the brunt of the discussion was sustained by the solicitor-general. Shortly after the king's recovery,

he was requested to attend at Windsor, and in the personal interview that followed, the king told him "he had no other business with him than to thank him for the affectionate fidelity with which he adhered to him when so many had deserted him in his malady." The report that Lord Thurlow was of the number is discountenanced in the "Anecdote Book." But it is stated that several of the king's friends thought it very desirable, for the king's sake, that Lord Thurlow should continue chancellor, and possibly that noble person thought it no less desirable for his own. A trifling incident, remarked at the time, was calculated to excite suspicion. When one of the cabinet councils, held at the Queen's House, broke up, and the ministers rose to depart, Lord Thurlow's hat was missing. After a fruitless search in the ordinary place, it was brought by a page, who said he had found it in the prince's apartment, where the chancellor, it seems, had left it, though he had no ostensible business there, and had said nothing of any interview with the prince. The report also derived plausibility from the known ill-will between Lord Thurlow and Mr. Pitt, which three years afterwards led to an open rupture, and narrowly missed affecting Lord Eldon's fortunes very seriously.

On this occasion Mr. Pitt sent for him, and said, "Sir John Scott, I have a circumstance to mention to you, which, on account of your personal and political connexion with Lord Thurlow, I wish you should *first* hear from myself. Lord Thurlow and I have quarrelled, and I have signified to him his Majesty's commands that he should resign the great seal." The answer, after an expression of regret, was, "My resolution is formed. I owe too great obligations to Lord Thurlow to reconcile it to myself to act in political hostility to him, and I have too long and too conscientiously acted in political connexion with you

to join any party against you. Nothing is left for me but to resign my office as solicitor-general, and to make my bow to the House of Commons." All Mr. Pitt could do was to persuade him to delay acting on this resolution till he had consulted Lord Thurlow. The chancellor, after hearing what had passed, said, "Scott, if there be anything which could make me regret what has taken place (and I do not repent it), it would be that you should do so foolish a thing." He added, "I did not think the king would have parted with me so easily. *As to that other man*, he has done to me just what I would have done to him, if I could. It is very possible that Mr. Pitt, from party motives, at this moment may overlook your pretensions; but sooner or later you *must* hold the Great Seal. I know no man but yourself qualified for its duties."

There was no reason beyond personal friendship, why the solicitor-general should resign with the chancellor, unless the chancellor had been going out on some question of principle, on which the solicitor-general agreed with him. Lord Thurlow was not the leader of a political party, and was merely individually offended with the premier. Sir John Scott kept his place; and Lord Loughborough received the Great Seal, to Thurlow's increased umbrage, who disliked and made light of him. Some good stories, illustrating this, are told in the "Anecdote Book."

Once when Lord Loughborough was making a considerable impression in the House of Lords, on a subject which Lord Thurlow had not studied in detail, the latter was heard to mutter, "If I was not as lazy as a toad at the bottom of a well, I could kick that fellow Loughborough heels over head any day in the week."

Lord Thurlow told George IV., who repeated it to Lord Eldon, that "the fellow (Lord L.) had the

gift of the gab in a marvellous degree, but that he was no lawyer"—adding, "In the House of Lords I get Kenyon, or somebody, to start some law doctrine, in such a manner that the fellow must get up to answer it, and then I leave the woolsack, and give him such a thump in his bread-basket, that he cannot recover himself." Dr. Johnson, in comparing the two, says, "I never heard anything from him (Loughborough) that was at all striking; and depend upon it, sir, it is when you come close to a man in conversation that you discover what his real abilities are. To make a speech in a public assembly, is a knack."

Early in 1793 Sir Archibald Macdonald became chief baron of the Exchequer, and Sir John Scott succeeded him as attorney-general. From this period, therefore, the responsibility of the Crown prosecutions devolved upon him, and it fell to his lot to institute some of the most memorable; among others, those against Hardy, Horne Tooke, and Thelwall. The result is well known. They all failed; and the attorney-general was much censured at the time, even by the friends of the Government, for preferring a charge of high treason, instead of indicting the accused for sedition. The defence is twofold: first, that such of the judges as were privy-councillors, and were present during the preliminary inquiries (including the chief justice who tried the prisoners), stated that, in their judgment, the parties were guilty of high treason; secondly, that it was expedient to make the country aware of the extent of the danger. With regard to the first ground, we earnestly wish, for the honour of British justice, it had never existed, though Chief Justice Eyre fortunately did not consider himself bound by his extrajudicial opinion. With regard to the second, it strikes us that nearly the same disclosures might have been made on a trial

for sedition. It is admitted on all hands, that the attorney-general conducted the proceedings with temper and forbearance. Horne Tooke walked up to him in Westminster Hall a few weeks afterwards, and said, "Let me avail myself of this opportunity to express my sense of your humane and considerate conduct during the late trials."

At the end of his speech against Horne Tooke, the attorney-general fell into his habitual error of justifying his character. "It is the little inheritance I have to leave to my children, and, by God's help, I will leave it unimpaired." Here he shed tears, and, to the astonishment of the Court, the solicitor-general (Mitford) began to weep in concert. "Just look at Mitford," said a bystander to Horne Tooke, "what on earth is he crying for?" "He is crying to think of the *little* inheritance Scott's children are likely to get."

The populace were highly excited, and the crown counsel had regularly to run the gauntlet between their own houses and the Old Bailey. One evening, as the attorney-general was about to leave the court, Garrow said — "Mr. Attorney, do not pass that tall man at the end of the table." "Why not pass him?" asked Law. "He has been here the whole trial," replied Garrow, "with his eyes constantly fixed on the attorney-general." "I will pass him," said Law. "And so will I," said Scott; "happen what may, the king's attorney-general must not show a white feather." The conclusion must be told in his own words: —

"I went and left them, but I will not say that I did not give a little look over my shoulder at the man with the slouched hat, as I passed him; however, he did me no harm, and I proceeded for some time unmolested. The mob kept thickening around me till I came to Fleet Street, one of the worst parts of London that I had to pass through, and the

cries began to be rather threatening, 'Down with him—now is the time, lads—do for him'— and various others, horrible enough. So I stood up and spoke as loud as I could— 'You may do for me if you like, but remember there will be another attorney-general before eight o'clock to-morrow morning; the king will not allow the trials to be stopped!' Upon this, one man shouted out—'Say you so! you are right to tell us. Let's give him three cheers, lads!' And they actually cheered me, and I got safe to my own door. When I was waiting to be let in, I felt a little queerish at seeing close to me the identical man with the slouched hat; and I believe I gave him one or two rather suspicious looks, for he came forward and said—'Sir John, you need not be afraid of me; every night since these trials commenced I have seen you safe home before I went to my own home, and I will continue to do so until they are over; good evening, sir!' I had never seen the man before. I afterwards found out who he was (I had some trouble in doing so, for he did not make himself known), and I took care he should feel my gratitude."* — [It is stated in the "Law Magazine," that Lord Eldon had once done an act of great kindness to the man's father.]

This was the period of Erskine's greatest triumph, and he availed himself of his popularity to come to the rescue of his antagonist. "I will not go on without the attorney-general," was his frequent call to the mob, as they crowded round his carriage to attend him home. Some years afterwards he was relating, in Lord Eldon's presence, how his horses were taken out by the mob at the conclusion of Hardy's trial. "Yes," added Lord Eldon, "and I

* An incident of the same sort occurred to the Duke of Wellington, when assailed by a mob on his return from the Tower, during the excitement occasioned by the Reform Bill. A young man in a gig, or taxed-cart, kept close to the duke's horse the whole way through the city, in such a manner as completely to guard one side. He never once looked up, nor had the air or manner of one who was doing anything out of the way; and we understand he remains to this day unknown, though the greatest disgrace that could have fallen on the nation was, in all human probability, averted by him. (See post, p. 451.)

hear you never saw more of them." The laugh was against Erskine, though the statement may be regarded as apocryphal.

In 1799 the chief justiceship of the Common Pleas became vacant by the death of Sir J. Eyre, and Sir John Scott immediately laid claim to it. Both the chancellor (Lord Loughborough) and Mr. Pitt wished to give it to Sir R. P. Arden (Lord Alvanley), then Master of the Rolls, and Mr. Pitt was also unwilling to lose a valuable supporter in Parliament. "The difficulties were at length overcome — Mr. Pitt agreeing, if, with the chief justiceship, I would, as Lord Camden did, go into the House of Lords as a peer; and the king consented, provided that I would promise not to refuse the Great Seal when he might call upon me to accept it." No conditions could be more flattering. He was made a sergeant (a necessary preliminary to a seat on the bench of a court of common law) on the 16th July, sworn of the Privy Council on the 17th, created Baron Eldon of Eldon on the 18th, and appointed chief justice of the Common Pleas on the 19th. It was then customary for the judges to wear powdered bush-wigs as a part of their ordinary costume. This fretted Lady Eldon, who was justly proud of her husband's good looks, and, by her persuasion, he applied to George III. for a dispensation, on the plea of headache. "No, no!" said the monarch, "I will have no innovations in my time." Lord Eldon then urged that wigs were in point of fact the innovation, not having been worn by the judges of the olden time. "True," rejoined the King, "and you may do as they did, if you like— though they certainly had no wigs, yet they wore their beards." *

* In the portraits of Sir Matthew Hale, and other judges of his time, hung up in the Courts of Guildhall, they are represented with beards and skull-caps; but these portraits are not much better painted

Sir John Scott's annual emoluments at the bar, during the six years he was attorney-general, varied from 10,000*l.* to 12,000*l.* In the most productive year (1796) they amounted to 12,140*l.* The circuit gains are small, and he was never esteemed a first-rate *nisi prius* advocate. The year before he became solicitor-general his fees exceeded 8000*l.*; so that he must have made a considerable sacrifice of private practice, with the view of giving his full attention to the business of the crown. Much larger professional incomes have been made of late years. The late Lord Abinger has been heard to say, that he received in one year, after he became attorney-general, more than 18,000*l.*; and the present attorney-general (Follett) is supposed to have exceeded that sum before he attained his rank. The office of attorney-general is now understood to be worth 12,000*l.* a year, independent of private practice.

The change during the eighteenth century was much less than might have been anticipated. Roger North tells us that in Charles II.'s reign "the attorney's place was (with his practice) near 7000*l.* per annum, and the cushion of the Common Pleas not above 4000*l.*" Mr. Barrington says (1795), "there is a common tradition in Westminster Hall, that Sir Edward Coke's gains at the latter end of the seventeenth century, equalled those of a modern attorney-general;" and it appears from Bacon's works, that he made 6000*l.* a year as attorney-general. Brownlow, a prothonotary of the Common Pleas during the reign of Elizabeth, received 6000*l.* per annum.

than the portraits of the Scottish kings at Holyrood, and may not be entitled to rank higher as authorities. The powdered wig gradually degenerated into an ordinary flaxen one; even that began to be left off about twenty years ago; and, since the death of Mr. Justice Littledale, no judge is distinguishable in a drawing-room from the ordinary mob of gentlemen by his dress.

"I received this account from one who had examined Brownlow's books, and who also informed me that Brownlow used to close the profits of the year with *laus Deo*, and when they happened to be extraordinary, *maxima laus Deo*." *

On the other hand, Sir Thomas More told his son-in-law and biographer (Roper), that he made about 400*l.* a year by his profession, "with a good conscience;" and in Seward's *Anecdotes*, we find, "my lord (Sir M. Hale) said that 1000*l.* a year was a great deal for any common lawyer to get, and Mr. Barrington said that Mr. Winnington did make 2000*l.* per year by it. My lord answered that Mr. Winnington made great advantage by his city practice, but did not believe he made so much of it."

Lord Eldon continued chief justice of the Common Pleas from July, 1799, to April, 1801. This was the brightest period of his judicial career. When he sat with his brethren in Banc, he was obliged to keep pace with them; and when he sat at *nisi prius* by himself, he was obliged to decide upon the instant. His tendency to hesitate, therefore, did not become manifest; while his learning, penetration, temper, and sagacity, might eventually have made him, what Lord Kenyon, on hearing of the appointment, said he would be—as consummate a judge as ever sat in judgment. It was also the happiest period. "How I did love that court!" is his parenthetical exclamation in the "Anecdote Book;" and once, during a walk with Mr. Farrer, after comparing the harassing duties of the chancellorship with the quiet of the Common Pleas, he suddenly turned round, and emphatically abjured his companion never to aspire to

* Observations on the more Ancient Statutes. By the Hon. Danes Barrington, 4to. p. 509. During the railway mania, as much as 40,000*l.* is said to have been made in the course of a parliamentary session by an eminent counsel.

the Great Seal — a curious piece of advice to a young barrister.

Early in 1801, when Mr. Pitt's resignation was anticipated, it was understood that Lord Eldon was to succeed Lord Loughborough as chancellor; but Lord Eldon maintained a cautious reserve on the subject, which he justifies by an anecdote. "Lord Walsingham, the son of Lord Chief Justice de Grey, told me that his father, the chief justice, gave a dinner to his family and friends, on account of his going to have the Great Seal as chancellor next morning, but that in the interim, between the dinner and the next morning, Mr. Justice Bathurst, it was determined, should be chancellor, and received the seal."

The Great Seal was delivered to him on the 14th April, 1801. He used to say he was the king's chancellor, not the minister's. "I do not know what made George III. so fond of me, but he *was* fond of me. Did I ever tell you the manner in which he gave me the seals? When I went to him he had his coat buttoned thus (one or two buttons fastened at the lower part), and putting his right hand within, he drew them from out the left side, saying, 'I give them to you from my heart.'"

It is remarkable that George IV., who, as he confessed, began by hating Lord Eldon, ended by becoming as much attached to him as George III. "On Monday," says Lord Eldon, in a letter to his grandson describing his final resignation, "your grandfather attended with the rest of the ministers to give up the seals of office, and was, of course, called in first. The king was so much affected that very little passed; but he threw his arms round your grandfather's neck and shed tears."

That resignation took place in April 30, 1827, on the formation of Mr. Canning's government. After allowing for the succession during the Whig Govern-

ment in 1806–1807, it appears that Lord Eldon held the Great Seal twenty-four years, ten months, and twenty-three days — a longer period than any other chancellor ever held it. It is strange, therefore, that his retirement elicited no address or testimonial from the bar, to whom he was uniformly courteous. An address was presented by the masters in chancery; but its value is somewhat diminished by a sentence in the answer:—"Lord Eldon reflects with great pleasure upon the fact, that he has given to the public the benefit of the services of *all* these gentlemen."

It is undeniable that Lord Eldon possessed judicial qualities of a very high order. They are thus mentioned by Mr. Abercromby (now Lord Dunfermline) in the House of Commons, so long ago as June 1828: "He expressed his belief that no man could be more conscientiously inclined to give a correct judgment than Lord Eldon; and declared himself willing to admit that the noble and learned lord was an individual gifted with the most extraordinary acuteness of intellect — that he possessed a most profound knowledge of law — that he enjoyed a most astonishing memory — and that he was endowed with a surprisingly correct and discriminating judgment."

We quote this to prove that there was no very great wish, even at that time, among his warmest political adversaries, to run him down. Conscientiousness, extraordinary acuteness of intellect, profound knowledge of law, astonishing memory, correct and discriminating judgment — what more can be demanded in a judge? — is the first question that suggests itself, as we glance over this splendid list of qualities; but, on looking a second time, we become aware that a material one is wanting — one absolutely indispensable to the effective application of the rest. That quality was decision. Pascal says that a

single additional grain of matter in Cromwell's *sensorium* might have destroyed his characteristic energy, and prevented him from attaining to greatness: this additional grain had unluckily got into Lord Eldon's. The good fairy had showered most of her choicest intellectual gifts upon his head, when the wicked fairy dashed them all with the prophetic denunciation, *thou shalt doubt.* And doubt he did, with a tenacity, ingenuity, and refinement, unparalleled in the history of mind. He loved an *if* as much as Tristram Shandy hated one. At the bar, he lost all his opinion-giving business, by his attachment to this little word; on the bench, he did all that in him lay to neutralise his utility by means of it. In allusion to Lord Erskine's fondness for the first person singular, the wits of the "Antijacobin" apologised for not reporting the whole of one of his speeches, because the printer had no *I's* left: they might have apologised for not reporting Lord Eldon's judgments for want of types to print his innumerable *ifs*, *buts*, and *thoughs*. As he grew older, he grew worse; and, latterly, there was hardly any chance of getting him to utter a sentence without a saving clause.

The existence of this tendency is notorious, but its peculiar mode of operating is less known; and we will therefore illustrate it by an example. We quote from Sir Samuel Romilly's "Diary:"—

"Of this case (the name is not material), which had been argued before the long vacation, the lord chancellor said to-day that he had read all the evidence over three several times, and that he did not think that there was sufficient proof to warrant his directing an issue, but that as it was the case of a pauper, he would go over all the evidence once more; and for that purpose he directed the cause to stand over generally, without appointing any time for his final determination. He thus condemns all the other impatient suitors to continue waiting, in anxious expectation of having

their causes decided, till he shall have made himself quite sure, by another perusal of the depositions, that he has not been already three times mistaken."

Sir Samuel observes that this habit was the more provoking, because Lord Eldon was hardly ever known to differ from his first impression. So well was this understood, that it was not at all unusual for parties to settle causes out of court, so soon as his impression could be collected. This, however, was no easy matter. What, for example, could be collected from the following ?—"His Lordship said, that he would not say, that, upon the evidence without the answers, he should not have had so much doubt whether he ought not to rectify the agreement, as to take more time to consider whether the bill should be dismissed." (*The Marquis of Townshend* v. *Strangroom*, 6 *Ves. Jun.*, p. 328.)

Such modes of conduct and expression are extremely inconvenient to suitors; but Mr. Twiss has convinced himself, and is resolved to convince the world, that Lord Eldon will go down to posterity with his judgments, like Napoleon with his Code (though hardly, we fancy, in his hand); and they are boldly proposed as the touchstone of his fame. In a passage which we quote for another reason, Mr. Twiss, after citing Mr. Abercromby's testimony as above, proceeds:—"Such acknowledgments (and they are frequent in the debates from 1823 to 1827) take away from his defenders all necessity, nay, almost all excuse, for indulging in the details of panegyric. He can have no more complete and satisfactory voucher than the *reluctant* candour of his adversaries. But it is not alone upon contemporary testimonials that his judicial fame will rest. The usefulness of a judge does not cease with his employment: his judgments survive to succeeding times as lights and landmarks; and with them his reputation endures. By such re-

mains, the lawyers of future days will form their estimate of Lord Chancellor Eldon."

Instead, however, of going to them at once, Mr. Twiss, by way of giving us a specimen of willing candour, goes first to a Number of this Journal, published more than twenty-one years ago (October 1823), when party politics ran high—quotes the strongest passages apart from the context—makes *them* the subject of a commentary—says nothing of a later article written in a most conciliatory spirit—and would fain lead the public to believe that we were guilty of an illiberal attack, and that he has fairly answered us. Does Mr. Twiss remember the contrivance by which Zadig's verses on the King of Babylon were converted into a libel?

It is told of Sheridan, that, on some occasion when his conduct had been misrepresented, he was advised to set himself right with the public. In order to pave the way, he addressed a letter to the newspapers under a feigned name, pointedly restating the charge; but, as soon as he had gone thus far, his habitual carelessness came over him, and the letter was left unanswered. Mr. Twiss has done for Lord Eldon pretty nearly what Sheridan did for himself; the only difference being, that Sheridan did not attempt an answer, and Mr. Twiss has attempted one in vain. But the policy of such a course is always doubtful when so long a period has elapsed. It is never wise to pin an adversary to the precise expressions uttered at the commencement of a dispute; and the party whose defence is undertaken on this principle is pretty sure to find himself in the condition of the boy in Don Quixote, who got a second thrashing in consequence of the knight's interference in his behalf.

We will do our best to prevent anything of this sort from occurring in the present instance; but we

cannot allow Mr. Twiss to triumph over a highly distinguished contributor (the late Mr. Justice Williams), whom he names. He begins by impugning our authority. We spoke, it seems, "of that laboratory called Mr. Vesey Junior's Reports, comprised as it is within the very moderate compass of *eighteen* solid octavos," and Mr. Twiss thinks he now has us on the hip. Every equity practitioner, he says, knows that there are *nineteen;* therefore you are not a good and true barrister at all, or not conversant with equity business. "In either case, it is obvious, that the criticisms, if they are to have any weight, must derive it from something more than the mere authority of the writer." To be sure they must. Testimony (as he might read in Hooker) is like an arrow shot from a longbow; the force of it depends on the strength of the hand that draws it. Argument is like an arrow from a crossbow, which has equal force, though shot by a child. Reviewers, writing anonymously, are, to all intents and purposes, crossbow men. But it hurts our feelings to be accused of ignorance. Let us see, then, how this weighty matter stands. Eighteen volumes of Vesey were completed in 1817; and it stood as an eighteen volume compilation till 1822, when another volume appeared. What more natural than, writing popularly, to speak of it as an eighteen volume book in 1823? —just as many of us went on speaking of the twelve judges of England long after they had become the fifteen.

This slip (if it be one) would hardly affect our testimony, did we wish to be received as witnesses; and, at any rate, our testimony would go as far as that of the witnesses adduced against us by Mr. Twiss; who actually attempts to bear us down by the testimony of dedications, addressed to Lord Eldon, during his chancellorship, by practising bar-

risters! We shall next have dedications from courtiers cited to prove the virtues of princes, or amatory verses, to prove that all the famous beauties were as virtuous as they were beautiful. When a practising barrister dedicates to a reigning chancellor, he means to flatter; and the most effective flattery is to praise a person for qualities which he or she ought to have, or pretends to, and has not. If a respectable man of letters had told Madame de Staël that her "Germany" was a great work, she would have turned from him with a sneer; but, by alluding to her feminine fascinations, the veriest coxcomb might have become her oracle. It would have been a hazardous feat to commend Cardinal Richelieu for his statesmanship; but a judicious compliment to his tragedy might have earned a pension or a place. Just so, Lord Eldon did not want learned gentlemen to tell him that he possessed vast learning (which he knew as well as they did), but to compliment him on having recast and systematised the doctrines of equity.

Such testimony, therefore, goes for very little, despite of the high professional reputation of the writers; and the question must be decided by the actual contents of the nineteen volumes (be the same more or less*), and the fifteen or sixteen other volumes of reports, in which Lord Eldon's judgments lie, like Egyptian mummies, embalmed in a multitude of artfully contrived folds and wrappers.

Mr. Twiss should refer us to an occasional judgment or two, like the best known of Lord Stowell's, or else to a series of judgments, like the whole of Lord Redesdale's or Lord Cottenham's—plain, clear, practical, and satisfactory; the obvious product of a mind *par negotiis neque supra*, amply supplied with

* We beg Mr. Twiss to mark this saving clause, for the edition now in use, including the index, consists of twenty volumes; and the first five are filled with cases decided prior to Lord Eldon's chancellorship.

general principles, and saturated with the peculiar learning of equity. He cannot do this. Still less (to revert a moment to the broad objection of delay) can he lay the blame on the system, and so excuse the judge, without accusing the legislator. Lord Eldon might have carried any measure of legal reform as easily as the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel carried Catholic Emancipation. In his own court, he might have played the part of Hercules in the Augean stable; but he preferred to sit among the accumulations of dirt and rubbish, and looked with marked disfavour on all who approached to meddle with them.

On the whole, this book will do more for Lord Eldon's private than for his public character. It shows him possessed of many amiable and attractive qualities; numerous acts of generosity, some amounting to munificence, refute the popular notion of his ingrained avarice, which had got abroad in consequence of his wife's thrifty housekeeping; his demeanour appears to have been uniformly upright and manly, as well as courteous*; and notwithstanding our rooted antipathy to Joseph Surfaces of all sorts, we are ready to believe that he was honest as this world goes, whilst eternally talking about his

* "Sir John Scott used to be a great deal at my house. I saw much of him then, and it is no more than his due to say, that, when he was solicitor and attorney-general under Pitt, he never fawned and flattered as some did, but always assumed the tone and station of a man who was conscious that he must show he respects himself, if he wishes to be respected by others." (*Life of Wilberforce*, vol. v. p. 214.)

It was Lord Eldon's habit of appealing to Providence, and his earnestness of tone on religious subjects, that laid him open to the charge of insincerity. In allusion to his slack attendance at divine service, it was said that he might be a bulwark or buttress of the church, but certainly not a pillar, as he was never inside; and the late Earl Grey used to tell a story of seeing him correct a private Act of Parliament whilst on his knees at prayers in the House of Lords. On Lord Grey's intimating surprise at the incident, "D—— it," exclaimed Lord Eldon, "you would do so too, if you were worked to death as I am."

honesty. But his friends must not claim an exalted place for him in the Temple of Fame, among the magnates of intellect, or the benefactors of mankind. There was nothing grand in his genius, elevated in his views, comprehensive in his benevolence, or far-sighted in his policy. He has not left a sentence which any one but a technical lawyer would care to read; and not a single measure of enlightened or largely useful legislation is associated with his name, except as an opponent. As for his statesmanship, the elaborate panegyric, forming the commencement of Mr. Twiss's first chapter, proceeds on a most gratuitous assumption. Mr. Twiss here assigns to Lord Eldon the sort of influence which was exercised (for good or evil) by Burke and Pitt. It was Burke who furnished the philosophy by which a halo was for a period thrown round ancient establishments. It was Pitt who formed the great continental and party league for their defence. Lord Eldon was simply one of the four or five statesmen who trod *haud passibus æquis* in the footsteps of their prototype. He did effective service in consolidating a Cabinet or two, but he never exercised an independent sway over the councils of the nation, whatever he might have done in the King's closet; nor ever led more than a section of the Tory party,—and it was fortunate for the Empire that he did not. "A few drops more of *Eldonine*, and we should have had the People's Charter."*

It is going far enough to call Lord Eldon a great lawyer; but to call him a great man, or assign him the honours paid to those who have performed noble actions, produced immortal works, or conferred lasting benefits on mankind, is to degrade the general

* Quarterly Review, vol. lxxiii. p. 542. He was not so much as consulted on the formation of the Duke of Wellington's government in 1828. (See *The Life*, vol iii. ch. li.)

standard of excellence, to canker public virtue in the bud. There are rewards of a different order set apart for those who work for present objects and present pay. To a fair share of these he was entitled, and he had it. His earldom, his half million, and the "one cheer more" of his biographer, are enough in all conscience for such services as his, even if the "one cheer more" should not be caught up and echoed back by posterity.

The following letter relates to the incident mentioned in the note, *ante* p. 437:

"19, King's Arms Yard.
"March 7th, 1845.

"Sir, — In reading the Review of the life of Lord Eldon in your January Number, my attention was particularly attracted to the note on p. 171."

"The unknown hero of the Reviewer's story is William Joseph Cooper, of 21, Sackville Street, Piccadilly. The occurrence took place, I think, on the memorable 18th June. Mr. Cooper was dining in the neighbourhood of the Tower, when he met the Duke of Wellington followed by a mob, who were wishing him many happy returns of the day, with a profuse accompaniment of yells and mud. Cooper at once turned his horse round, drove into the midst of the rabble, and ranged up alongside the Duke. His Grace's groom rode on the other side. Thus escorted, his Grace proceeded through the city; the manifestation of popular gratitude continuing in quantity and quality much as before, the Duke's escort partaking largely of the honours designed for his Grace. At the corner of Chancery Lane, some policemen came to the Duke's assistance, and Mr. Cooper returned into the city and called upon me. He was covered with mud, and was smarting under some bruises, which he had received in exchange for the effective application of the butt end of his whip. He told me of his morning's work, and was highly delighted. For such an exploit, distinctions of all sorts naturally suggested themselves to every

one but Mr. Cooper, who seemed to think (as your Reviewer expresses it), that he had done nothing 'out of the way.' Of this I am quite sure, that if any visions of greatness did present themselves to Mr. Cooper's mind, they all fell far short of the flattering distinction of his humble yet hearty services receiving such honourable mention in the columns of your distinguished periodical.

"I have the honour to be, sir,
"Your most obedient servant,
"THOS. LACY."

"To the Editor of the 'Edinburgh Review.'"

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